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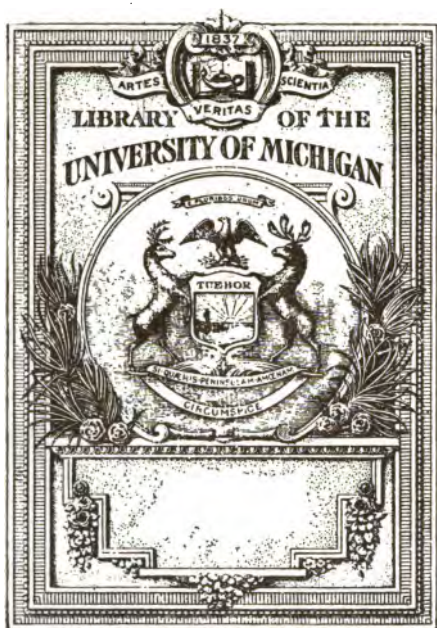
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FOUR ONE ACT PLAYS

THE REST CURE—BETWEEN THE
SOUP AND THE SAVOURY—THE
PROS AND CONS—ACID DROPS

By ^{EL}
GERTRUDE JENNINGS

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THE REST CURE

*'The Rest Cure' was produced at
the Vaudeville Theatre, London, on
March 16th, 1914, by Norman
McKinnel.*

CHARACTERS

CLARENCE REED

OLIVE, His Wife

ALICE PALMER (*Dark Cat*) } Nurses at the Home
MAY WILLIAMS (*Fair Cat*) }

MURIEL, Servant at the Home

The SCENE is a bedroom in a Nursing Home

THE REST CURE

The scene is a small bedroom, the walls of which are distempered. The furniture is of white wood. The floor is covered with oil-cloth. On the window-sill there is a parrot in a cage.

MURIEL, the servant, is sweeping. MURIEL is a round-faced, healthy-looking girl with fuzzy light hair. She picks up a hairpin and puts it in her hair.

ALICE PALMER enters. She is pale and dismal, but rather a pretty girl with dark hair. Her voice is sharp and snappy.

ALICE. Are you nearly done, Muriel? The patient will be up in a minute.

MURIEL. Yes, nurse. I put a match to the fire, but it ain't drorin'.

ALICE. I hope the horrid thing isn't going to smoke.

MURIEL. I 'ope not too, nurse, but a more contrivin' chimbley than this one I never come acrost.

ALICE. You'd better do the grate in No. 5 now.

MURIEL. Yes, nurse. (*Going reluctantly to door.*) That there gent in No. 5 hollers at me somethin' awful. He says if I come into the room again he'll wring my neck.

ALICE. I can't help his troubles. The grate must be done.

MURIEL. Yes, nurse. (*She meets MAY outside the door.*)

MAY. What are you doing in there, Muriel?

MURIEL. Getting the room ready, nurse.

MAY. Oh, bother, is any one coming in to-day?

MURIEL. I don't know, nurse.

ALICE (*calling*). May!

(MAY enters. *She is a very pretty fair-haired young woman, with a bright, vivacious manner.*)

MAY, Oh! You're here. Who's coming? I never hear a word. I do think Matron might let me know.

ALICE. It isn't a new patient exactly. It's that tiresome little toad from No. 3.

MAY. The one that came in last night?

ALICE. Yes. He's a terror. What do you 'spose he's complained of?

MAY. Don't know.

ALICE. The *noise*, my dear. Says the traffic in the King's Road disturbed him. Says he was awake all night with it. I couldn't quiet him, no matter what I did, and Matron says you're to have a try.

MAY. What's he in for?

ALICE. A rest cure. He writes books.

MAY (*disappointed*). Oh! An author!

ALICE. Yes. Needn't say any more, *need* I? He's been kicking up such a shine about the motors. Complained to Matron, if you please! (MAY *tosses her head*.) I suppose he thinks the traffic ought to be turned off the King's Road for him. Are these clean sheets?

MAY (*doubtfully*). Oh, well—yes—Turn them head to foot, if you like.

ALICE. I think they're good enough for *him*.

MAY. What does he write, novels? I wish it was Charles Garvice or Nat Gould.

ALICE. No such luck. He writes vers libre.

MAY. What's that?

ALICE. Something improper, by the sound of it.

CLARENCE (*heard outside*). Gently, dear, gently.

ALICE. Here he comes.

MAY (*looking out of the door*). He's not so bad looking. (*With interest*.) I rather like his face. Oh, I think he's quite nice. Who's the female?

ALICE. That's his wife.

MAY (*very disappointed*). Oh! Married!

ALICE. Yes, dear. No chance for you!

MAY (*pettishly*). Don't be silly. You know I don't mean that.

CLARENCE (*outside*). Higher, is it? Oh, dear!

MAY. I suppose I *must* take him.

ALICE. Of course you must. Buck up! (*She goes out, and stands in the doorway*.) This is the room, Mrs. Reed. Yes, in here.

(*Enter CLARENCE REED. He is dressed in pyjamas and a dressing-gown. He is supported by his wife, a pretty, fragile, rather depressed-looking woman of 28.*)

CLARENCE (*discontentedly*). Is *this* the room?

ALICE. Yes.

CLARENCE. It's very small, isn't it!

ALICE. Oh, no, Mr. Reed! It's not quite as large as the one you had last night, but it's one of our very best rooms.

CLARENCE. Really?

ALICE. Oh, yes.

OLIVE. I'm sure you'll like this, Clarence; it's very bright.

CLARENCE (*suspiciously*). Where does that window look out on to?

ALICE. That's a mews. So you see you'll be quite quiet.

OLIVE. A mews? But is that healthy?

ALICE. We've never had any complaints.

CLARENCE. Curious. Is it a feather mattress?

ALICE. Oh, no. We haven't any.

CLARENCE. I had one last night.

ALICE. The only one in the house.

CLARENCE. Does the bed squeak?

ALICE. Squeak ?

CLARENCE. The one downstairs squeaks disgracefully. When I didn't jump at the sound of motor buses, I flinched at the squeaking of the bed.

MAY. How very strange. Our beds have always been considered quite noiseless.

ALICE. Oh—this is your nurse now, Nurse Williams.

CLARENCE. How do you do ? I'm sorry to seem fussy. But, really, I've had a most awful night. The motor buses were too dreadful. It seems so strange to have a Nursing Home in one of the noisiest streets in London. I feel quite a nervous wreck this morning.

MAY. Perhaps you had better get to bed.

OLIVE. Yes, dear, do.

MAY. I think you have been having too much excitement. It makes one fanciful, doesn't it ? Seeing so many people, too, is upsetting—

OLIVE. I had better be going.

CLARENCE (*terrified*). Oh, no, Olive, don't go yet. I've got ever so much to say to you.

MAY. Well, five minutes, Mr. Reed, no more. After that, no visitors, no books, no papers, for a month. You know the rule.

CLARENCE. Ah, but that's just what I need ! A thorough rest ! I'm completely run down. (*He looks at MAY.*) My nerves are in a terrible state. (*He looks at Dark Cat. They all turn away.*) I—

MAY. Well, I'll look in in five minutes and then—no more talking ! (*She goes out with ALICE.*)

CLARENCE (*getting into bed*). Good-looking girl, the fair one, but very firm. However, that's what I need. I do hope this bed doesn't squeak ! (*Bounces to try it.*) No, it doesn't seem to. I'm always inclined to do too much. And you never stopped me, Olive.

OLIVE. I did my best. (*She arranges his pillow.*)

CLARENCE. Ah, but you've no authority, dear. I don't *blame* you, but of course, with a nervous highly

strung man like myself, firmness is necessary. Otherwise I go beyond my strength. And it isn't right. My work ought to be done. Who will write my books after I am gone? I have asked you that so often. And you never know *what* to say. Very well, then!

(The Parrot whistles.)

CLARENCE. What on earth is that noise?

OLIVE. I suppose they will bring up your clothes and all your things. I should like to have seen you quite settled in before I left you.

CLARENCE. Now why worry about my clothes? I shan't want them again for a month. Such a blessing! You always make a fuss about trifles.

(The door is opened noisily and MURIEL staggers in with a large pile of mixed clothing, walking-stick and sponges, etc.)

MURIEL. Beg pardon, sir, your things.

CLARENCE. Yes, yes. Put them down anywhere.

MURIEL. Yes, sir. *(Rolls them down in a heap.)*

OLIVE. I'll put them away.

MURIEL. All right, mum. *(She goes.)*

CLARENCE. Now, Olive, do sit down. I've only got two or three minutes with you, and I want to have a few last words of the greatest importance. Don't fidget about. You know how it worries me.

OLIVE. Very well, dear. *(She sits by him.)*

CLARENCE. Now, please, listen *very* carefully. I want to read you a few extracts out of this most valuable little book.

OLIVE. A book?

CLARENCE. Yes, I found it in the waiting-room.

(The Parrot repeats his whistle.)

CLARENCE. What is that peculiar whistling?

OLIVE. But, Clarence, dear, you know you aren't allowed any books.

CLARENCE. No! But I knew I should want to

read myself to sleep last night, so I secreted this. I was rather upset when I saw the title, *The Nurses' Pocket Book*! But it turned out most interesting.

OLIVE. I don't see how it *could* have.

CLARENCE. Olive, if you'd only study this book, you'd make quite a capable nurse. And when I come back home you'd be able to look after me properly.

OLIVE (*rising from her chair*). But, Clarence, I hope you're coming home quite well!

CLARENCE. Perhaps I shall. Who knows!

OLIVE (*meaningly*). I think you'd better, Clarence dear, because otherwise there may not be a home to come to.

CLARENCE. What do you mean?

OLIVE. Oh, nothing.

(*The Parrot whistles.*)

CLARENCE. I wish somebody would stop that noise! It's getting on my nerves. Now, I'll just read you a few simple rules on nursing. Here's the page. "Always give the patient nourishing and tempting food." Now you know, Olive——

OLIVE. Please don't say I didn't give you enough to eat!

CLARENCE. Not always tempting. Once you offered me boiled mutton.

OLIVE. That was five years ago.

CLARENCE. Never mind. The fact that I remember it shows——

(*The door bursts open and MURIEL enters with a jug.*)

MURIEL. 'Scuse me, won't you? It's the water.

(*She pours the water into a jug on the wash-hand-stand.*)

CLARENCE. Trying, rather, don't you think?

OLIVE. Very.

MURIEL. That's all right! (*She goes out.*)

CLARENCE. Well! To go on. "Never stand

talking in a patient's room to a third person." *Excellent*, that is. "If putting coal on the fire, wrap each lump in a piece of newspaper, and place it lightly on the fire." *You* never did that. Oh, that ugly jarring noise of coal! "Do not bang the door." "Do not talk about anything gloomy or depressing." And you *would* remind me about the water rate!

OLIVE. It had to be paid.

CLARENCE. I see no reason. I must say, though, that the nurse I had last evening—you know, the dark one—wasn't very cheerful. She *would* talk about operations. And they all ended fatally. Well—— (*He takes up the book to resume. MAY enters.*)

MAY. Time is up, Mrs. Reed. Very sorry, but I must ask you to go now.

OLIVE. Certainly.

CLARENCE. Oh, but I hadn't half finished!

MAY. Such a pity, but Matron's rules, you know.

OLIVE. Good-bye, dear boy. Try and get well and strong again, won't you? I shall call and ask after you every day, and send you flowers.

CLARENCE. Good-bye, Olive. Take care of my books, and don't let Gyp tear the curtains.

OLIVE. No, dear. Good-bye. (*To MAY.*) Good morning.

(OLIVE goes.)

CLARENCE. Gyp is her dog.

MAY (*she is not at all interested*). Oh, yes?

CLARENCE. He's a nuisance in the house. I'm a mere bundle of nervous tissue, and I can't bear any noise.

MAY. I had an uncle like that. With him it was drink.

CLARENCE. Really!

MAY. Yes. Never saw a man drink like that. He died of it. It was when we were living at Sydenham. Father was alive then. I'm the youngest of ten. Too many, wasn't it? All girls, and all pretty

B

but me. I was considered the plain one of the family.

CLARENCE. Indeed? I——

MAY. All my sisters earn their own living. One's a teacher, one lectures, three of them are married. We did have a nice house at Sydenham before father died. We had three sitting-rooms and a conservatory. It *was* a nice house. And we knew all the best people.

CLARENCE (*bored*). Oh, really!

MAY. We entertained such a lot. And there were dances once a month. We all used to go. I met *such* a nice man at one of the dances. It was Coronation year, and Judith was going to be married. Her fiancé was in a Government office, and he said——

(The Parrot whistles his tune.)

CLARENCE (*frantic*). There's that terrible boy again?

MAY. What boy?

CLARENCE. That whistling boy! It's too awful. Couldn't you speak to him?

MAY (*cheerfully*). That? Oh, that's my parrot. He's on the window-sill.

CLARENCE. Your parrot!

MAY. Yes. I keep it here because it's the sunniest room. One can't be too kind to dumb animals.

CLARENCE. No. Not if they're really dumb. Now, don't you think this parrot——

(MURIEL rushes in, very much excited.)

MURIEL. Please, nurse, Matron says you never give Mrs. Barclay her sleeping draff, and she's gone off to sleep without it.

MAY. Can't Nurse Palmer give it?

MURIEL. Please, nurse, she says it's not her business.

MAY (*annoyed*). All right. I'll come. But that woman's an awful bother to wake up once she's gone off to sleep.

(MURIEL exits, followed by MAY. They leave the door open.)

CLARENCE. Nurse! Nurse!

MAY (returning). Yes?

CLARENCE. Please shut the door. There's such a draught.

MAY (annoyed). Certainly.

(Exits, banging door, which makes CLARENCE scream. She returns.)

MAY. Did you call again?

CLARENCE (frightened). No!

MAY. Oh!

(Exits, banging the door again. CLARENCE shudders, then decides to sleep a little. He draws the sheet up to him. ALICE enters noisily. CLARENCE starts up.)

ALICE. Only me. I think I must have left my thimble in here day before yesterday. You don't mind if I look?

CLARENCE. Not at all.

ALICE (hunts round the room). I used to bring my sewing here because the patient was lonely. Funny thing, you know. He came in for a rest cure.

CLARENCE. Did he? Was he an author?

ALICE. Oh, no, he was a gentleman. But the queer part of it was that he thought he was run down, and really he was dangerously ill. (Opens and shuts the chest of drawers.)

CLARENCE. Really! I always say that my wife may be quite wrong about me. I don't think I would have such curious pains——

ALICE. He was a very nice gentleman. Came in here for a month. (Pokes under bed with CLARENCE'S stick.)

CLARENCE. And how long did he stay?

ALICE. Well, he never really went, as you might say——

CLARENCE. What! He——? (*Looking at her anxiously.*)

ALICE. Yes, night before last. This has never been a lucky room. (*Feeling along the bed for thimble.*) Funny, where *can* I have put that thimble! I must hurry up. I've got such a very bad case upstairs. Delirious. He gets quite violent sometimes, and roams about the house. So awkward.

CLARENCE. Roams about the house!

ALICE. Yes. Oh, here it is! (*Picks thimble up and knocks over a table.*)

CLARENCE. Oh!

ALICE. That's the worst of these tables, they do upset so easily.

CLARENCE. I was thinking I should like to sleep a little.

ALICE. Sleep? Yes—do—though your dinner'll be in soon. You haven't come across a needle anywhere in the bed, have you?

CLARENCE. No!

ALICE. Oh, never mind, it'll turn up.

MAY (*outside*). Nurse Palmer!

ALICE. Yes?

MAY. Where are you?

ALICE. No. 10.

(MAY enters.)

MAY. Oh, my dear, such a joke!

ALICE. What's happened?

MAY. Why, you know that girl in No. 11 who was supposed to have nettlerash?

ALICE. Yes?

MAY. Well, it turns out she's got scarlet fever!

CLARENCE. What!

ALICE. Never!

MAY. Yes! And Dr. Preston's so cross because he said nettlerash. And of course, she oughtn't to be here at all! (*They both laugh.*) They'll have to

get her away somehow. I had to come out of the room, I laughed so much.

CLARENCE. But surely, nurse, it isn't very safe! You have obviously come right out of the infected room in here! I surely ought to have another nurse!

MAY (*casually*). Oh, no, you're all right.

ALICE. Just you have a little nap, Mr. Reed.

CLARENCE (*much upset*). Yes, but I don't think——

MAY. Dr. Preston *did* turn a colour and Matron looked right down her nose and sniffed, *you* know.

ALICE. Rather! I know Matron's sniff!

(*They both laugh, throwing themselves against the bedstead.*)

CLARENCE (*in an agony*). Would you mind? I really feel very ill. I *should* like a little sleep.

MAY. Yes. It'll do you good. Come along, nurse, and see the end of it. (*They move towards the door.*) Oh, your fire wants seeing to. I'll send Muriel.

CLARENCE. Who's Muriel? Couldn't you do it yourself?

MAY. *Hardly* part of our work, is it? Now, don't you worry. Lie down and keep quite quiet. Then you'll soon get well. (*They go to door.*)

ALICE (*in an undertone, but quite audibly*). There's something more the matter with that man than nerves. If ever I saw death in a face——

(*They exit, banging the door. CLARENCE jumps out of bed and goes to the glass, looks at his face earnestly in different lights.*)

CLARENCE. Cheerful! I must say. (*He sits despairingly on the side of his bed.*) They haven't even read the *Nurses' Pocket Book*! (*There is a knock on the door.*) Come in!

(*Enter MURIEL with a large scuttle of coal.*)

MURIEL. It's the coal, sir.

CLARENCE. So I see.

MURIEL. Am I to put it on, sir?

CLARENCE. Yes, yes.

MURIEL. Thank you, sir.

CLARENCE. You know how to do it?

MURIEL. Oh lor! yes.

CLARENCE. She has read the *Nurses' Pocket Book*. Are you going to be a nurse some day?

MURIEL. Oh, no, sir. Nurse Palmer says I haven't got the brains. I'm going to be an author.

CLARENCE. Oh, are you! My poor girl!

MURIEL. Yes, sir. I'm going to write stories. And as soon as I can buy a typewriter I shall print 'em. You see, I can't git the better of the spellin', sir, so I 'as to wait for a typewriter to do it for me.

CLARENCE. I suppose your stories will all be about dukes and duchesses, and beautiful ladies.

MURIEL. No, sir. They're going to be about myself and the queer things I seen at Nursing 'Omes, and the folks we 'as 'ere as thinks themselves ill. I goes about and sees it, and says to meself, What mugs! And then I sets it down in my book.

CLARENCE. But people are really ill, sometimes, you know.

MURIEL. They don't make 'arf the fuss then, sir. When they've come to lay me down and die they're as noice again. It's the 'ealthy ones that 'ollers. Why, the way I've 'eard people carry on when they didn't like their dinner. They'll holler 'arf acrost the 'ouse! And then these 'ere cases as eats up pounds of butcher's meat and has to be rubbed after it. I 'aven't 'arf got some notes down about 'em. Wot mugs! that's wot I say! (*With this she pours the coal on the fire with a deafening crash. CLARENCE gives a prolonged scream.*)

MURIEL. Wot's the matter? You ain't never frightened! Why it was only me putting coal on the fire. Wot d'yer think it was?

CLARENCE (*weakly*). I thought it might be that.

MURIEL. Then why were you a-hollering?

CLARENCE. Have you ever read the *Nurses' Pocket Book*?

MURIEL. Wot? That muck? Not me. It's a fair 'umbug, that book is.

MAY (*outside*). Muriel!

MURIEL. Yes, nurse, I'm comin'. That's to No. 5. Just in. P'raps I shall 'ear something I can set down in my book.

CLARENCE. I say?

MURIEL. Um?

CLARENCE. Don't you ever set down the nurses in your book?

(MURIEL turns at the door and winks.)

MURIEL. Not 'arf! (*She goes out.*)

(CLARENCE laughs, settles into bed.)

CLARENCE. Ah, well! (*Dozes.*)

(*A voice of a street singer outside is heard singing in raucous tones "Oh Killarney." At end of the first four lines CLARENCE groans. At the end of the second he sits up exasperated, and then rings the bell violently. No one comes, but the song continues. He rings again. A pause. Enter MAY.*)

MAY (*coldly*). Are you ringing?

CLARENCE. Yes, nurse. Would you be kind enough to tell that woman to go away?

MAY. What woman?

CLARENCE. That woman screaming in the street.

MAY (*with kind firmness*). Come, come now, you mustn't be fanciful. That's only some one singing. You won't get better unless you keep perfectly quiet. Do remember that.

CLARENCE. How can I keep perfectly quiet in the midst of such a hullabaloo?

MAY. Now, really, Mr. Reed, you do exaggerate, don't you? You remind me rather of my sister Rhoda. She's the typist, you know. She'd swear

black's white, I assure you. Gets her into *such* difficulties. We all went to a *matinée* once at the Lyceum, I remember, and——

CLARENCE. Yes, I'm sure it was very awkward. That woman seems to have gone away now.

MAY (*looking out of the window*). Yes. She's moved on. There's another Nursing Home a little higher up, where they take mental cases. She generally makes something there. (*A bang on the door.*) Come in!

CLARENCE. I hope this is not the roaming man.

(*A man enters carrying a portmanteau, which he throws on the floor and exits.*)

MAY (*disdainfully*). Oh, your portmanteau! What a bother, isn't it? Are you good at unpacking?

CLARENCE. Not at all!

MAY. Then I'd better get Muriel. It's hardly my work, is it? (*Goes to door.*) Muriel! I expect she's about somewhere. I'll send her in.

(*Enter MURIEL.*)

MURIEL. Was you callin' me?

MAY. Yes. Unpack this bag, put away all these things, and then come to me in No. 5.

MURIEL. Yes, nurse. (*MAY goes out.* MURIEL *begins unpacking.*) (*Darkly*) You've got 'er, 'ave you?

CLARENCE. Yes. Why? Is she——

MURIEL. Well! I dunno that she's worse than the others. They're all cats 'ere. I calls 'em Dark Cat, Fair Cat, and Sandy Cat. She's Fair Cat. I think p'raps she is a bit worse. You see, it's like this. She's a take in. Merry and bright, and all that, and all of a suddint, when you ain't lookin', she'll give you one in the eye.

CLARENCE. Oh, will she! (*He is terrified.*)

MURIEL (*who is unpacking busily*). She's all right

with some people, but you seem to 'ave rubbed 'er up the wrong way.

CLARENCE. I'm sure I don't know how. I've been most considerate, I'm sure, and I hope courteous.

MURIEL. My eye! I 'ope so, too, for your sake. She's 'unted two or three to the brink of their grave, as you may say. Dark Cat can learn 'em the creeps, too. Course, I never give 'em away to Matron.

CLARENCE. But why not, my good girl, why not? It seems to me it's your *duty* to speak, your most obvious duty.

MURIEL. Well, you see, sir, I ain't rich enough for dooties of that sort. When I'm a nauther I'll tackle Fair Cat and all of 'em. Course, if any one was reely ill, I might be a 'ero. And then agin I might not.

CLARENCE. What do you mean by really ill? Every one who comes is surely *ill*. They don't come here for pleasure.

MURIEL. Lor' bless you! Yes. Why, all of these 'ere rest cures are 'umbugs. Why don't they rest at 'ome? That's wot I say. Genrally speaking their relations pays to get rid of 'em for a month, you take it from me.

CLARENCE. You don't quite understand. A nervous temperament——

MURIEL. I know that nervous temperance, and wot I say is, give me liquor. You know where you are wiv liquor, but when it comes to nervous temperance!——

CLARENCE. Come here, girl! (*Startled, she goes to him.*) Look at me! You can see I'm really ill, can't you? Do you know what's the matter with me?

MURIEL. I never arsk that, sir. It's lookin' for trouble, that is. If I once started talkin' to patients about their insides, I'd never get my work done. But as it 'appins, Dark Cat told me it was 'eart disease.

CLARENCE. What!!!

MURIEL. Yes. That's what made me talk so

friendly to you. I don't chat like this to every one mind, but I always tries to cheer up the 'earts.

CLARENCE. I knew it! I always knew it! I said to Olive, there is more wrong with me than nerves. And I feel worse every moment.

MURIEL. I don't wonder, in this place. There! Everythink's put away right enough. I can't find no trousers. Spose you brought them?

CLARENCE (*with dignity*). Certainly.

MURIEL (*searching in the portmanteau*). Must have left them downstairs. They'll turn up. Oh! 'Ere's a photygraph.

CLARENCE. Put it on the mantelpiece, will you? It's my wife. Heart disease!

MURIEL. It's a byootiful face. That's the sort of face I'd have picked if I'd had my choice. But I was be'ind the door when looks was given out. 'Ad to put up with brains instead. She's a reel byooty. I sorrer comin' in with you. She looked a bit different from this though.

CLARENCE. That photograph was taken before our marriage.

MURIEL. Ah! That explains it. She looks 'appier in the pickcher. In reel life she's got a worried look, like a new-born baby as didn't want to come.

CLARENCE. She worries over me.

MURIEL. Reely now! But why d'ye let 'er? I shouldn't. You didn't oughter let her.

MAY (*on the landing*). Muriel!

MURIEL. That's Fair Cat. Yes, nurse.

MAY. Come and get Mr. Reed's dinner at once!

MURIEL. Yes, nurse.

CLARENCE. Put the photograph here by me, will you?

(*She gives him the photograph, but the name has puzzled her.*)

MURIEL. Mr. Reed! Ain't your name Carmichael?

CLARENCE. No.

MURIEL. Not? Then you're not the one with heart disease!

CLARENCE. Oh! Aren't I?

MURIEL. Sorry. My mistake. Then wot is it you're in here for?

(Enter MAY, who is very cross.)

MAY. Come *along*, Muriel! What *are* you doing! Mr. Reed's dinner's been out there for more than half an hour. I nearly had to bring it in myself. *(Exit MURIEL.)* I'll put the table ready. So awkward, Mr. Reed, we're afraid some one has taken some of your clothes by mistake. You know, the ones you took off last night. The coat and waistcoat came up here, I know, but not—the rest. You didn't bring another suit, did you?

CLARENCE. No. Miss Bruce said the smallest possible amount of clothes.

MAY. Quite right. Well, they're sure to turn up. And, anyhow, you won't want them for a month. Nice to think of, isn't it?

CLARENCE *(dolefully)*. Delightful.

MAY. Come on, Muriel. *(MURIEL enters with a tray.)* I shall never get my own dinner! Ah, here it is! Doesn't it look good? So glad it had the covers on—Lucky, isn't it? Take them away, Muriel. *(Hands them to MURIEL.)* Now you can manage.

CLARENCE *(inspecting the plate)*. Nurse!

MAY. Yes?

(MURIEL stops to look at him.)

CLARENCE. Do you know what this is?

MAY. No, I don't think I looked.

CLARENCE *(vibrating with indignation)*. It's boiled mutton!

MAY. Oh, is it?

CLARENCE. I never eat boiled mutton. Even to look at it makes me ill.

MAY. What a pity.

CLARENCE. And it's half cold, even then!

MAY. I was afraid it might be a little chilly.

CLARENCE. I can't touch it. I don't want it even near me. Please take it away.

(MURIEL looks on aghast.)

MAY. But you really ought to eat *something*, you know. Just to keep your strength up.

CLARENCE. Of course. But I must have something else.

MAY. There isn't anything else. But there's the suet pudding. Eat that. It's so nourishing.

CLARENCE. I don't like suet pudding.

MAY. You're rather hard to please, aren't you?

CLARENCE. I don't call it hard to please when I don't like lukewarm mutton and suet! I've had a miserable morning of noise and upset. I've got one of my bad headaches coming on, and now there's no dinner except mutton and suet! It's a shame, that's what it is! I've never been treated like this before! And all this trouble and expense——! (*He cries.*)

MAY. Well, I never.

CLARENCE. Please go and tell the Matron I want to speak to her at once.

MAY. I can assure you that——

CLARENCE. Please go and tell the Matron.

(MAY exits, flouncing.)

CLARENCE. Disgraceful!

MURIEL (*passionately*). I shall have to set you down in my book.

CLARENCE. What!

MURIEL. And I thought you was different! I thought you was reely bad. That's why I started cheerin' you up. Now I see you must be one of them rest curers.

CLARENCE. No, indeed, I——

MURIEL. I spicioned it when I saw the mut. Hot mut the fust day, sez I. No slops? sez I. 'E can't surely be a 'umbug. But when you starts a-hollerin', I knew all right. You can always tell if they hollers.

CLARENCE. I was perfectly justified in objecting to that horrible dinner.

MURIEL. I oughtn't to 'ave spoke. It ain't part of my dooty to cheer the patients up, even if they've got Fair Cat to look after them. But I do feel sorry sometimes for the reel ones. They *can't* get out, sez I. But the ones that comes in 'ere ter please theirselves! No! (*She goes to the door.*)

CLARENCE. Muriel! (*She stops.*) Come here! (*She returns.*) It seems queer that I should want to explain myself to *you*. But I do somehow.

MURIEL. I'm a 'uman being, I 'ope.

CLARENCE. Yes. Well—you see, it's like this. I do vers libre, that's poetry. I'm making a great book. And of course, if I die, who's going to write it?

MURIEL. And if you don't die, who's going to read it?

CLARENCE. I never thought of that. Perhaps that's the answer I've been looking for! Perhaps my work isn't as important as I thought. Perhaps *yours* on Nursing Homes is really more valuable.

MURIEL. Oh, I wouldn't like to say *that*.

CLARENCE. Still, even if I'm no use, I think I'd like to live a few more years, and I shan't unless I get out of this place. When the Matron comes I shall tell her I am going away to-day.

MURIEL. Lor' love a duck! sir, the *Matron* won't come. Nurse knows better than to go to her with any nonsense of that sort. She'll just 'ang about on the stairs for a few minutes, and then she'll come in and say "the Matron's gone out."

CLARENCE. Then I must give in my notice by letter.

MURIEL. You won't be allowed to leave like that, sir, not in such a 'urry.

CLARENCE. Why not? If I pay for the month.

MURIEL. Give the place a bad name, sir. Look as if you wasn't satisfied. And "Qui sec sac," as they say in French.

CLARENCE. They can't *prevent* my going.

MURIEL. They can make it very unpleasant, give you my word.

CLARENCE. Oh, dear! And I hate scenes! Why did I come? Oh, I know, Olive can do it for me. Is there a telephone?

MURIEL (*rises*). Yes, sir.

CLARENCE. You telephone and tell my wife to come at once. I never know the number, but you'll find it. Hurry up!

MURIEL. 'Scuse me, but the telephone's in Matron's room, and I'm not allowed to go near it.

CLARENCE. Never mind. Do it for me. Just this once.

MURIEL. I'd like to do it, but I ain't rich enough to be a 'ero.

CLARENCE. I'll give you ten shillings—I'll——

MURIEL. 'Ush!

(*Enter MAY.*)

MAY (*loftily*). The Matron has gone out, so I was unable to report to her. (MURIEL *looks at CLARENCE meaningly*.)

CLARENCE. Oh, it doesn't matter.

MAY. Do you desire any more dinner?

CLARENCE. No, thank you.

MAY. Then take away the tray, Muriel.

(MURIEL *takes away the tray*, MAY *pulls down the blinds*.)

MAY (*loftily*). I want you to sleep till four. Tea is at five.

CLARENCE. Thank you.

MAY. I trust you have everything you want.

(Exit MURIEL.)

CLARENCE. Yes, thank you.

MAY. That's good. (*At the door.*) I shall expect you to be more rested after tea. (*Exits.*)

(*After a pause, CLARENCE springs out of bed, and after one or two false alarms, gets his dressing-gown on. The door opens quietly. He gets behind the chair. MURIEL enters stealthily.*)

CLARENCE. Oh! It's you, Muriel.

MURIEL. 'Ow are you feelin'?

CLARENCE. Much worse.

MURIEL. Wot! Not that bad 'ead comin' on agen?

CLARENCE. No, no. I shall never have that any more. I'm going to be a different man if I can only get out of this place.

MURIEL. Ah! I dessay. They all say that.

CLARENCE. Muriel! Help me to escape?

MURIEL. Wot? Going to 'op it?

CLARENCE. If you'll help me!

MURIEL. Wot can I do?

CLARENCE. Find my trousers. They're on the stairs or somewhere. Then do cave for me till I'm safely away. *Will* you?

MURIEL. I can't, Mr. Reed. I can't reely. If I was to do this, one of the cats would find me out and I'd be sent away.

CLARENCE. I'll give you a sovereign, Muriel.

MURIEL. It's temptin'. But when it's spent, where am I?

CLARENCE. You shall come into our house. You shall be our parlour-maid.

MURIEL. Wot! I'd like to see your wife's face when I walked in as parlour-maid, with a swanky cap and apron, I don't think!

CLARENCE. Muriel, you shall be my secretary. To you I will dictate the *Vers libre*! You shall use my typewriter!

MURIEL. Wot! For my book?

CLARENCE. Yes.

MURIEL. It's a go! I'll be a 'ero. It's worth it for that. Now this is the best time of the 'ole day for you to get out of the 'ouse. They're all asleep, all except the patients. You pack your things while I look for your pants. If you 'ear any one comin' slick back into bed.

CLARENCE. All right.

(He goes out of bed and begins to pack, throwing the clothes wildly into the bag. At last there are footsteps. He flies into bed. ALICE enters noisily.)

ALICE. Hope I didn't disturb you. I left my book in here. *(She gets book and is going, when she sees the portmanteau).* Why! Didn't Muriel finish un packing for you?

CLARENCE. Yes—no—yes.

ALICE. How stupid! I suppose I shall have to do it.

CLARENCE. Please don't trouble.

ALICE. Matron wouldn't like it if she saw the portmanteau still in here. Oh, they are in a mess, aren't they! I think I must leave it to Muriel; I'll send her in to you. *(Tumbles the things out.)*

CLARENCE. Thanks so much.

ALICE. There's been such a fuss upstairs. My patient found a bit of glass in his jelly. As I said to him, "What can you expect?" *(She sees he isn't listening.)* Oh! You're going to sleep, I suppose.

CLARENCE. Yes, yes.

ALICE. I should. You look dreadfully bad. This never has been a lucky room. The nights I've sat up here! *(The door opens and MURIEL's head is poked in.)*

MURIEL (*hoarsely*). No luck yet! (*The head vanishes.*)

ALICE. What is the meaning of that?

CLARENCE (*faintly*). I've no idea.

ALICE. Most eccentric. She must be told not to behave like that. It must have given you quite a start.

CLARENCE. Oh, no, I'm used to it.

ALICE. But I can see you're upset. You've turned such a queer colour. I think I'd better get Dr. Preston. He's in the house, I know.

CLARENCE. No, please don't trouble. I really feel perfectly well. The quiet and rest have done me all the good in the world—I'd much rather not have the doctor.

ALICE. Oh, all right, if you really feel better I——
(*The door opens, a pair of trousers is thrown in. They hit ALICE.*)

ALICE. The girl must be mad. What in the world is that? Muriel!

CLARENCE (*feebly*). I think it's only my clothes.

ALICE. But what a way to bring them in. Muriel!

(*She goes just outside the door. CLARENCE climbs out of bed and steals towards his trousers.*)

(*Shrilly*) You're a very careless, ill-mannered girl, and I shall certainly speak to Matron about you. Throwing things in like that, and making all that noise, when you know the patient's been ordered complete quiet! I shall go straight off to Matron as soon as she wakes up, see if I don't. Don't you let me hear any more of it!

(*Returning—CLARENCE feigns sleep.*)

That'll be all right, Mr. Reed! You'll hear no more of *her*, so go off to sleep in comfort.

CLARENCE. Thank you, so much.

ALICE. Not at all.

(She exits. CLARENCE springs up. The parrot whistles. He throws a boot at it. MURIEL pokes her head in.)

MURIEL *(very much excited)*. Now's yer chance!
But sharp's the word!

CLARENCE. Then get out!

(He begins to dress as the curtain falls.)

**BETWEEN THE SOUP AND
THE SAVOURY**

*"Between the Soup and the Sa-
voury" was produced on Oct. 19th,
1910, at the Play-house, London, by
Mr. Cyril Maude.*

CHARACTERS

MARIA, the Cook

ADA, the Parlour-maid

EMILY, the Kitchen-maid

The Scene represents a Kitchen

BETWEEN THE SOUP AND THE SAVOURY

The scene is a cheerful, bright kitchen, and the time the beginning of dinner—upstairs.

EMILY, *a meek, pathetic little kitchen-maid, is at the range*; COOK, *a handsome, buxom woman, is washing parsley.*

COOK. Did I put any salt in the soup, Hemily?

EMILY. Yus, Cook.

COOK. Saw me do it, did you?

EMILY. Yus, Cook.

COOK. She turns back this morning when I thought I'd got rid of her and sez, "Cook," she sez, "your Master tells me you don't know the use of salt." Those were her very words.

EMILY. And what did you say?

COOK. Oh, I never loses my temper, however much I'm 'ectored, so I just answered quiet like but firm: "Well, mum," I sez, "it's a good thing 'e knows *something* which I don't." You should 'ave seen 'er look.

EMILY. Lor'!

COOK. Oh, I don't believe in flying out at people. Not that I'd let myself be put upon neither. My mother that lives in Putney brought me up most careful in that respect. "Marie," she sez, "you remember who you are and others will do the same. That's the way."

EMILY. I should like to see any one down you.

COOK. Neither wouldn't I. I'm just the same with Mr. Pollard. "Arthur," I sez, "if you wants to spend an afternoon with me on Sunday we go to Kew or nowhere." Just like that—quite pleasant.

EMILY. And 'e 'as ter go?

COOK. Should think so! Not that we've bin yet, but it's all the same principle, (*ADA, a smart, pretty girl with a brisk manner and rather a strident voice, enters, carrying a tray with soup plates*) so just you 'old to that, Emily, and don't make yourself cheap with no young man.

ADA. Don't you waste time advising *her* what to do, Marie. Can you see Emily with a young man? Not much!

COOK. Soup all right?

ADA. Not enough salt.

COOK. 'Oo says so?

ADA. "She" did. Open like. Master tastes it, puts down his spoon, and raises his eyebrows, so—"She" flushes up and says quiet like, "I *have* mentioned it." Master says, "Not with much effect."

COOK. Ho, indeed! Was that all?

ADA. Yes. I suppose he didn't like to use language in front of Miss Angela's *fiangcée*.

EMILY (*timidly*). 'Ow is Mr. Forbes looking, miss?

ADA (*looking her up, and down scornfully*). Now then, 'urry up with those plates!

(*EMILY does so.*)

Rose is always out when there's company. (*She goes.*)

EMILY. Ada's a bit short with me sometimes.

COOK. Well, it's none of your business asking after the gentry. What's it to you how Mr. Forbes is? Are the pertatoes ready?

(*EMILY tries them with a fork.*)

EMILY. Just on. I only asked after Mr. Forbes. bekos he's going ter marry Miss Angela.

COOK (*consulting a cookery book*). You put enough salt in the soup next time, and don't be filling your head with romances.

EMILY. I only——

COOK. There, that's enough. Where's Rose gone to-night?

EMILY. Mr. Fuller is a-taking of her ter the Exhibition.

COOK. Has she asked "Her" for late?

EMILY. Naow.

COOK. Lor'! Took the key, 'as she?

EMILY. Naow.

COOK. There now, that beats me. You'll have ter sit up, and mind you're quiet opening the door. That lower 'inge still squeaks. She said ter me only Saturday, "'No one out after ten' is my rule, as you know, Cook, and please remind the others"—which I never did. However, it's a poor heart that never rejoices. Pick up that spoon. You'll be wanting it in a minute, and then it will be minus.

(EMILY *picks up the spoon.*)

EMILY. I wish I had somebody ter walk out with.

COOK. You walk out with them pertatoes if they're done.

(*Enter ADA, with a tray: she looks in a hand-glass and puts her cap straight. EMILY is now dishing up the potatoes.*)

ADA. Lively lot in there, I must say. Master looks like old Nick.

COOK. Per'aps he's made a fool of himself on the Stock Exchange, as per usual.

ADA. Oh, I dessay. He generally works it off on the family.

EMILY. Ain't Miss Angela in her usual, Miss Makepeace?

ADA (*ignoring her*). Mr. Forbes, he's hardly spoke, and it's my belief there's something up between him

and Miss Angela, for he hasn't pressed her foot under the table once, nor eaten her bread, which is his custom, and more than that, when Master was arguing with "Her" over the electric light bill, I heard Miss Angela say quite plain, "If you don't believe me there's no more to be said!" Just like that.

EMILY. How beautiful!

ADA (*sharply*). What are you a-hanging round listening for? Be off! (EMILY *turns away, gets fowls and exits to lift.*)

COOK. And what did Mr. Forbes say?

ADA. Couldn't quite catch the beginning, as Master he bellows so, but it was something like—"If you'd cared for them it couldn't have happened."

COOK. Them! That's queer! If it had been "me," I'd have understood. (*The bell from the dining-room rings.*)

ADA. Well, they 'ave gobbled and no mistake. You did say no entrée? (EMILY *re-enters.*)

COOK. Yes. Only roast fowls. Emily—

EMILY. Yes, mum, they're on the lift.

ADA. Pity you're such an image to look at. I'd like a little extra help upstairs. Come along with that bread sauce! (EMILY *brings it.*) Hurry up! (*Between them they upset the sauce.*) There, you've dropped it!

EMILY. I didn't!

ADA. Don't argue. Lucky it's fallen on the table. Spoon it up. What the eye don't see the heart don't grieve over. (*The bell rings again.*) Oh, keep it up! (*She exits.*)

EMILY. You know I didn't drop it, Cook. She did it 'erself.

COOK. Emily, you ferget yourself! Put them dishes under the tap and don't let me hear no nonsense. What next, I wonder!

EMILY. I'm sorry, Cook. (*She takes the soup plates away to the sink.*)

COOK (*breaking eggs and beating them in bowl*). Well,

so long as you sees you're wrong. A-critikizing of Miss Makepeace, indeed!

EMILY. I know it were taking a liberty, Cook. I forget myself.

COOK. I should think so.

EMILY. It comes over me sometimes just like a sort of spasm, ter think I'm the same as others.

COOK. Don't you encourage them fancies, Emily. They're morbid, that's what they are.

EMILY. What's morbid, Cook?

COOK (*adding milk and sugar*). Morbid? Why, you ought to know that. It's like—you ought ter be ashamed of yourself fer asking. Where's the vanilla?

EMILY. 'Ere it is! (*Takes it from table, and gives it to COOK.*) I can't 'elp thinking sometimes when I'm a-washing up what it 'ud be like ter be a young lady wot had a young man ter walk out with.

COOK. Well, you won't never have one, Emily. You haven't the looks—not unless it was a blind man or a widower with children wot needed managing. You needn't look at me so hot. I'm only telling you for your good. (*Pours soufflet from the bowl into a dish, and puts it into the oven.*)

EMILY. Perhaps as I can't 'ave no young man you might learn me ter be a real cook some day.

COOK. Not I. You're too 'eavy-'anded. No, there's some people meant ter be kitchen-maids, and you're one of 'em. (*ADA enters with the fish plates.*)

ADA. Master's in a stew, I can tell you. Says the bread sauce tastes of paraffin. Give us that chair. (*EMILY gets a chair and ADA sits down.*)

COOK. Lor'! There was a drop of paraffin on the table, now you mention it.

ADA. "She" asked me why there was paraffin in the bread sauce, under her breath, when I was passing the greens. Just ter shame her, I spoke out loud—like this—"I couldn't say, mum." That finished her.

COOK. She never gets the better of you.

ADA. Should 'ope not. Miss Angela and Mr. Forbes are going on like anything.

COOK. Making up to each other?

ADA. Not them. I should say it's about broken off by now.

EMILY (*creeping down to ADA, in an agitated voice*). Oh, naouw, Miss Makepeace. My heart bleeds ter 'ear it. It can't be true.

ADA. Hulloa, what's all this? Well, you 'ave got some sauce! Upon my word!

COOK. Don't mind 'er, Ada. Her head's turned reading novelettes. She's all on love and marriage, and wishes she 'ad a young man.

ADA. A young man? Her? Oh, don't, Cook, you'll be the death of me. (*She finishes her sentence between shrill laughs.*) Emily with a young man! Oh, I shall split myself!

COOK. I told her she was morbid. (*Also laughing.*)

ADA. I should say so! (*Still laughing.*) Look at her! What sort of young man will you have, Emily? Oh, dear! There's the grocer's boy—he isn't more than half wanting. Would he do? Or Buggins that was in the motor accident—he's still got some face left—you'd suit him nicely! (*By now she and Cook are quite hysterical. The bell rings. There is a sudden silence.*) Now, they can't have got through that, not if they ate with both hands.

COOK. It's only for vegetables, I expect.

(*ADA snorts, takes up her tray and goes out.*)

(*COOK brings ingredients and begins making the savoury.*)

COOK. Not but what they 'ands the vegetables themselves when Rose is out, don't they?

(*There is a pause. EMILY is too much hurt to answer.*)

COOK. Now then, Emily, what's the matter with you? You're never sulking over what's bin said,

are you? Well, you are a caution, and no mistake! Taking offence just bekos we were having a bit of fun! Me and Ada can't 'elp your looks.

EMILY. It ain't that, Cook.

COOK. Well, what is it, then?

EMILY. You won't believe me if I tell yer.

COOK. You think I'm a regular Roman! Out with it! I'll believe yer if I can.

EMILY. Well, Cook, I 'ave got a young man, so there!

COOK. Oh, go on. You're romancing.

EMILY. I'm not, neither. I've got a real young man. He's not Buggins, nor 'e ain't the grocer's boy. He's a regular idol.

COOK. 'Ere, Emily, if you think I'm going ter swallow *your* capers you're extremely mistook. You do your work and don't tell me none of your embroideries.

EMILY. But, Cook——

COOK. That's enough!

(ADA returns.)

ADA. Marie!

COOK. Well?

ADA. I'll ask you ter give a guess as to Master's latest.

COOK (*bored*). Oh, lor'! Found a bit of grit in the gravy?

ADA. No!

COOK. Chickens taste of paper?

ADA. No.

COOK. I give it up. Wot is it?

ADA. Too much noise in the kitchen.

COOK (*springing up*). What?

ADA. It's a fact!

COOK. Well, I'm——!

ADA. So am I.

COOK. Too much *noise*!

ADA. Of course, if we're negro slaves, let 'im say so and be done with it.

COOK. Eggsactly!

ADA. Per'aps he'd like us ter live dumb mutes with cashmeres round our heads. That 'ud suit his taste, no doubt.

COOK. It's news ter me that because you 'ave a light 'and with pastry you're not permitted ter smile.

ADA. Or that it's a sin to pass a few pleasant remarks in the retreat of your own apartments.

COOK. What did "She" say?

ADA. She was frightened. I could see that. I closed the door very quiet, and just caught her speech—"You'll have to replace them, that's all."

COOK. That's sense, that is.

ADA. Oh, "She"'s no fool.

COOK. If it wasn't for Mr. Pollard I should certainly leave at the month.

ADA. Of course I showed them just what I thought of it.

COOK. Natchally.

ADA. I said, "Very sorry, mum, it shan't occur again," and left the room.

COOK. Very proper.

ADA. And now, Emily, you see what comes of your putting *yourself* forward. If you 'adn't said that about wanting some one to walk out with—

COOK. Oh, but you ain't 'eard the latest, Ada.

ADA. Why, wot is it?

COOK. Emily says— (*She laughs under her breath.*)

ADA. Well, get on!

COOK. Emily says— (*She laughs again.*)

ADA. 'Urry up!

COOK. Go on, Emily, I can't!

EMILY. It ain't nothing, Miss Makepeace. Only—I 'ave got a young man, that's all.

ADA. Oh, 'ave you? Where do you keep 'im, Emily? In the larder, or up the chimney?

(COOK gives a loud laugh.)

ADA. Sh! Cook! (*She points upwards.*) Wot's his name, Emily? Wot's he like?

EMILY. I can't sorter describe 'im, but 'is name is 'Arold.

ADA. 'Arold! Oh, lor'! I suppose he's rich, eh?

EMILY. He has a confidency.

ADA. Hold my hand, Cook. And does he love you, Emily?

EMILY. Yuss, he does.

ADA. Has he spoken of his devotion?

EMILY. Yuss, he 'as. (COOK giggles.)

ADA. Be quiet, Marie! And written you letters?

EMILY. 'Undreds.

ADA. You've kept 'im pretty close, Emily.

EMILY. It didn't seem some'ow delicate ter speak of 'im.

COOK (*in an outburst of impatience*). Oh, Emily, how you can stand there! I should think the floor would open beneath you.

EMILY. It's true what I'm telling you.

ADA. She'll face you out with it, see if she don't.

COOK. Now get on with your work, Emily. You do beat everything to-night. I don't know what's come over you.

EMILY. What 'ud make you believe I'm speaking the truth?

ADA (*winking at COOK*). Well, seeing's believing, so I'm told.

COOK. Yes, let's 'ave a look at 'Arold, that's all.

EMILY. So you shall, but he's away just now.

ADA. Oh, I dare say. He'll stop there, too.

COOK. Per'aps you've got a letter of 'is, Emily?

ADA. Yes. Per'aps you can show us something sweet in writing.

EMILY. Well, per'aps I can.

ADA. Let's see you do it, then.

EMILY. If I fetch you one, will you promise not ter snatch it?

COOK. Certainly.

EMILY. I'll read you one, then.

ADA. That's right.

(EMILY goes off. The two other servants look at each other.)

ADA (to COOK). She's going to make it all up.

COOK. That's it!

(EMILY returns with a little packet made of dirty newspaper.)

COOK. Where 'ave yer 'ad it?

EMILY. In the boot box, wrapped up.

ADA. Well, I never did! Now then, read it out.

EMILY. You won't believe me without?

ADA. Not likely!

(She and COOK settle themselves in chairs to listen. EMILY still hesitates. At last she unfolds the newspaper, and extracting a letter, reads. The servants giggle at first, but gradually become impressed.)

EMILY (reading.) Dearest little woman. It seems years since I saw you last, and the stupid days never will go by and bring us to Saturday——"

COOK. Saturday! Why, you 'aven't 'ad Saturday out since I've bin 'ere!

EMILY (hesitating). Naow, but I—I used ter meet 'im at the corner when you sent me out ter post the letters.

COOK. Mean ter say he hung about on the chance of that? Why——

ADA. Hush, Marie! Go on, Emily.

EMILY (reading). "I think abart you all day long, when I ought ter be doing my work——"

COOK. He'll get the sack, see if he don't.

EMILY. "And all the while old Grub thinks I'm

answering letters, I'm drawing your dear little face on the blotting-paper——"

ADA. Dear—little—face! Yours!

EMILY. "I wasn't much of a feller before I knew you, dearest of all, but you've made me ashamed of myself, and I mean to do all I can to be more worthy of you and your love."

ADA. Well, I never.

EMILY. "I think per'aps a good woman never really understands 'ow much her ex—exis—tence means ter the man 'oo loves her. It reminds 'im of all the things 'e 'eard and saw when 'e was a little feller, and the world was so wonderful—flowers and sunsets, and the sound of 'is mother's voice teaching 'im 'is prayers. 'E didn't think abart it all at the time, but when years 'ave gorn by 'e begins to remember and ter know that 'e was 'appy then. And this 'appiness you bring back to me, my darling, because I love you and because you are so far better than I shall ever be. Always, always yours, 'Arold."

(There is a long pause. They are all rather subdued, EMILY is almost crying. She replaces the letter in the packet.)

ADA. She hasn't made that up.

COOK. I must say it really is a beautiful letter.

ADA. I've 'eard worse.

COOK (*reflectively*). I can't quite make out 'ow he sees all that in you, Emily.

ADA. No, still there's no doubt he has a very gentlemanly way of expressing his feelings, be they what they may.

COOK. Quite 'andsome I call it. I congratulate you, Emily. Not that I believe it'll ever come to anything.

EMILY. Oh, don't you think so, Cook?

COOK. No, I don't. What do you say, Ada?

ADA. Don't sound like it. All that poetry is suspicious. They come straight ter the point if they

mean anything. Still, even ter walk out with, he's very superior. Tell you what—— (*The bell again.*) Oh, lor'! there's that old bell! I'll 'ear more when I come down. Give us the sweet, Emily.

COOK. Good 'Evens! if I ain't forgot about the soufflet!

(*COOK and EMILY rush to the oven.*)

COOK. This is a day of misfortune! Drat me, gossiping here while my dinner's getting spoiled!

(*As they bustle about the bell rings again.*)

COOK. Give it 'ere, Emily. 'Urry up! Why, it's all flat, and black as coal. Can't be helped. Wasn't your fault. There, pour the cream over it. (*EMILY does so.*)

ADA. Pretty looking sight, that is! If it hadn't been for Emily——

COOK. No, no, it ain't the girl's fault. There! Let's 'ope they won't notice. (*The bell rings.*) Get on, Ada!

ADA. That's right, ring away. (*She goes.*)

EMILY. I'm very sorry, Cook!

COOK. Don't you fret. Be ready ter take the fowls off the lift. I do call it mean of "Her" not to let us finish 'em up. We've had that salt beef for three days. 'Owever, we've got that choice little bit of savoury to-night. And I've made an extra lot, so's there'll be enough for every one. Now tell us more about your young man, Emily. What made you used to pretend you 'adn't got one?

EMILY (*awkwardly*). I dunno, Cook.

COOK. Oh, come, you must 'ave some reason.

EMILY. Well, you see, it's all been 'ushed up bekos 'is father objects ter the match.

COOK. Does he, now? Well, I call that a shame. I don't say you're a beauty, Emily, but looks ain't everything. What does he do fer a living—'Arold, I mean?

EMILY (*hesitating*). Oh, he's in the carpentering.

COOK. Oh! Then why is he writing all day long, as he said in the letter?

EMILY (*embarrassed*). He—he 'as ter take measures and keep them in a book.

COOK. Funny. I never 'eard tell of any such thing. There's the lift.

(EMILY fetches the dish of fowls from the lift outside.

COOK inspects the carcases *disparagingly*.)

COOK. They've made those fowls look pretty miserable. I wonder if "She" 'd miss that wing if—— Put 'em in the larder.

(EMILY *does so*.)

COOK. You might tell us a bit more while we're waiting.

EMILY. More?

COOK. Yes. Seems ter me it 'ud be soothing after seeing those chickens. Now, as 'e ever given you 'anythink?

EMILY. Yuss, Cook. He giv me a locket and a anagram.

COOK. Anagram? What's a anagram?

EMILY. It's poetry.

COOK. Do you know it?

EMILY. Yuss, I think so——

COOK. Go on! Let's 'ear it.

EMILY. All right, Cook. (*Monotonously*).

"My first is coloured like the rose,
That scents the garden far and wide;
My second tells of sparking snows;
My third——"

COOK. I can't make head or tail of that, Emily. If that's an anagrammar, I can do without it. You might show us the locket.

EMILY. The locket?

COOK. Yes, the one he sent you.

EMILY (*embarrassed*). Oh, that one. I—sent it back.

COOK. Never!

EMILY. Yes, I did. I thought it wasn't right for me to take it.

COOK. Well, you were a looney! Catch me a—sending back of any jewellery or such like. Now, if it was the anagrammar you sent back, I could 'ave understood it. Is that Ada back so soon? (*Enter ADA, bringing the soufflet dish.*)

ADA. They 'aven't touched the pudding, Cook, no more than just ter play with it. Master, he laughed contemptuous, and pushed 'is plate away. Mr. Forbes, he made an effort, but did most under his spoon, and as to Missus, she bit her lip.

COOK (*moving to the oven and making ready the savoury*). Well, the savoury's just on ready. It's angels on horseback.

ADA. Enough for us? I always was partial to that.

COOK. I've made six good 'elpings, and Miss Angela don't touch it, so we ought ter 'ave three over. Don't offer it a second time.

ADA. No fear. What do you take me for? Oh, I've found out what was the matter between Miss Angela and Mr. F.

COOK. Oh, indeed? (*EMILY shows interest.*)

ADA. Yes. Seems she's lost something he sent her and it's caused such a to-do.

COOK. What is it that's lost?

ADA. Something by the name of an anagram. (*EMILY in agitation drops a knife on a plate.*) He said a bit of it—something about my first and my second : sounded like his wives.

COOK (*startled*). My first and my second!

ADA. Yes. I don't wonder you're surprised. From all I could hear it was some sort of a riddle, and they was to have found it out together. My first is coloured like a nose—or some such contrivance.

Come on with the savoury. We shall never be finished.

COOK. Did he say anything about some locket he'd sent her?

ADA. Yes—how did you know?

COOK. Something told me. (*The bell rings. She puts the savoury on ADA's tray.*)

ADA. Oh, they're a hungry lot, they are! They won't be a minute polishing this off. I shall stop up for the fruit. By-bye, I am looking forward to this savoury. (*The bell goes again.* She makes a face at ceiling and exits, closing the door behind her with her foot.)

COOK. Well, Emily, per'aps you'll be so good as to explain yourself!

EMILY. Explain myself?

COOK. That's what I said. You're not going to tell me there's two young men a-sending of two locketts and two anagrammars to both of you?

EMILY. No, Cook.

COOK. No, Cook. I should think not! You—you 'aven't bin carryin' on with Mr. Forbes, 'ave you?

EMILY. No, Cook.

COOK. Stop calling me no Cook! There can't be a sort of epidemic of anagrammars, I serpose?

EMILY. No, Cook.

COOK. Well then, Emily Ashe, what in 'Evin's name has happened?

EMILY. I don't feel as I can ever explain.

COOK. Well, you have a try, that's all, or it might be my dooty to go to Missus.

EMILY. Oh no, Cook. I *will* tell you, only I'm put to it to begin, some'ow.

COOK. Well, I'll look the other way. Go on.

EMILY. Well, first there ain't no 'Arold at all.

COOK. No 'Arold?

EMILY. No, nor never was.

COOK. Well, there! But who wrote the letters?

EMILY. Mr. Forbes.

COOK. Then you *have* been carrying on with Miss Angela's fiancée?

EMILY. No—the letters wasn't written to me.

COOK. Emily, to whom was they written?

EMILY. To Miss Angela.

COOK. Did you intercept them? Stop them from getting to her?

EMILY. No.

COOK. What, then?

EMILY. I only borrowed them!

COOK. Borrowed them!

EMILY (*with a wail*). Yuss. I did so want to have a bit of romance, and Mr. Forbes he's always bin my idol. And they looked so nice all tied up with ribbon, and I only kept one or two of 'em a day at a time.

COOK. Oh, then you've bin making a 'abit of this, 'ave you? 'Ow did you find out where they was kept?

EMILY. One morning when Rose was pushed I was 'elping 'er do the rooms. I put away Miss Angela's stocking, and there the packet was, and I saw just a little bit, and I pulled one out, and after that I used ter borrow them regular.

COOK. It's no better than stealing. Of course there's times you can't 'elp seeing a bit of a letter, and no 'arm either if it's left about. But taking them away—no. And then showing them to us as your own! Well, Emily! (*She turns away disgusted.*)

EMILY. It was a bit of pride.

COOK. Pride?

EMILY. Yuss. I know you ain't meant it, Cook, but it's cut me cruel to 'ave you and Ada always amaking fun of me. You don't know how us ugly ones feels over a little thing like that. Mother was the same—she'd give me a push and say, "Go away, you little moral, you won't never get a husband!" It used ter 'urt me awful. (*Burying her head in her hands she sits, sobbing.*)

COOK. You're a queer customer, Emily, but I don't believe there's much 'arm in you. You're touched, that's all it is, a bit touched.

EMILY (*gratefully*). Oh, Cook!

COOK. Of course, if I was to do my duty, I should report this to "Her." But there, I don't hold with telling tales. Servants must 'ang together, or what's ter become of England? Besides that, I see that per'aps things 'ave bin a bit 'ard for you, Emily, what with your face an' all.

EMILY. Oh, Cook! (*EMILY cries, overwhelmed by COOK's kindness.*)

COOK. There, don't 'owl. You'd better put those letters back in the drawer. Not under the stockings—she'll 'ave looked there. Come ter think of it, she'll have turned out the 'ole place if there's bin a rumpus. Better put them be'ind the drawer, see?

EMILY. Yes, Cook.

COOK. And don't you ever touch 'em again, Emily.

EMILY. No, Cook.

COOK. I shan't say nothing to Ada about this affair. Ada's so 'igh-minded, she might not see it the same way I do.

EMILY. Thank you very kindly.

COOK. Wait a bit, though. 'Ow are we going to explain about 'Arold? Why he don't write no more nor come ter see yer nor anything? (*EMILY shakes her head.*) Strike her at once, that would. Ada's so sharp.

EMILY. So she is. I suppose I couldn't say as 'ow I'd broken it off?

COOK. Well, 'ardly. You've got to think of something likely.

EMILY. Can I say 'e's broken it off?

COOK. Of course you can. That'll sound quite natril. He's thought it over and broken it off, and mind you act according.

EMILY. I don't like ter think of 'im doing such a thing!

COOK. Now, Emily, when there's no such person as 'Arold! I've no patience with you! Now don't you go filling your 'ead up any more with romances and idols and all them fancy dishes. Roses and snowses and noses are all very well for such as can afford them; you can't. You do your duty and keep your saucepans clean, (*with great condescension*) and per'aps, 'oo knows, I might take you over to see my mother at Putney!

EMILY (*gratefully*). Oh, Cook!

COOK. So it ain't turned out so badly after all. Sh! Here's Ada! (*To ease the situation she hums a tune.*)

(*Enter ADA, boiling with indignation. She comes quickly to the table.*)

COOK. Why, Ada, what's the matter?

ADA (*holding up the empty dish*). Here's the savoury! 'Aven't left so much of it as a crumb of toast! Greedy, guzzling pigs, I call 'em! (*She bangs the dish down. COOK and EMILY are overwhelmed by the gluttony of their employers.*)

CURTAIN.

1.0

9:

THE PROS AND CONS

***"Pros and Cons," under the title
of "Our Nervous System," was pro-
duced at the Playhouse, London, on
April 16th, 1911, by Mr. Cyril Maude.***

CHARACTERS

BRENDA

MRS. CHRISTIE, her Mother

EVANGELINE, her Cousin

FREDDIE, her Husband

SCENE.—The study in BRENDA and FREDDIE's flat.

THE PROS AND CONS

The scene is a rather conventional Edwardian room the drawing-room of middle-class people living in a middle-class flat in South Kensington. The ornaments are Art nouveau, the water-colours washy.

MRS. CHRISTIE and EVANGELINE are discovered in the room, both in outdoor clothes. EVANGELINE is a very pretty minxy flapper of seventeen. MRS. CHRISTIE is a handsome, blonde, stout, middle-aged woman handsomely dressed by Peter Robinson. She has a meek, amiable disposition, and is in consequence never very happy. She is now, in fact, sniffing violently.

EVANGELINE. Please don't, Aunt Isabel. I'm sure it's not as bad as you think.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Lawyers, Evangeline; when it comes to lawyers one may well cry.

EVANGELINE. It sounds important, but Freddie and Brenda are different from the ordinary married couple. They don't even quarrel in the ordinary married way.

MRS. CHRISTIE. How do you mean?

EVANGELINE. Most people have their rows in private, and no one's much the wiser. Our two make the most awful scenes, drag in every one else, and, when the whole place is ringing with the affair, they make it up and blame us.

MRS. CHRISTIE. How you exaggerate, Evangeline!

EVANGELINE. Do I?

MRS. CHRISTIE. If you knew what married life was——

EVANGELINE. Well, I'm learning—by example. Anyhow, I can't excite myself over Brenda—it will end in the same old way.

MRS. CHRISTIE. You are wrong, Evangeline. Brenda has never before consulted a lawyer—then look how she begged us to come round at once—her voice—even through the telephone! And she wouldn't hear of my refusing, though really I ought to be at the dentist's.

EVANGELINE. It was just as bad when we were at Cromer and she criticized Freddie's poems: Brenda kept us up for three nights talking against him, quite spoiled our holiday, and then they made it up and said it was all because they loved each other! My book on the pros and cons of marriage got very full that time—on the con side.

MRS. CHRISTIE. You are very hard, Evangeline.

EVANGELINE. I remember these things.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Well, I am Brenda's mother, and no one shall say I do not sympathize with her.

EVANGELINE. No one ever will. Only don't forget that last time they accused you of having caused the row.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Perhaps I *was* to blame.

EVANGELINE. Oh, nonsense.

MRS. CHRISTIE. And where is Brenda?

EVANGELINE. Powdering her nose, I expect.

(The telephone bell rings. EVANGELINE goes to the telephone.)

EVANGELINE. Yes? Yes. One moment, I'll tell her. (She goes towards the door and meets BRENDA entering in a dramatic manner. BRENDA is a pretty young woman, with a talent for making scenes.) Oh, Brenda, some one wants you on the telephone.

BRENDA (with emotion). Evangeline! Mother! (She embraces MRS. CHRISTIE.)

EVANGELINE (*cheerfully*). Hurry up, Brenda.

(BRENDA then goes to the telephone.)

BRENDA. Yes. Yes. (*After a pause.*) Oh, my dear—don't ask me to tell you . . . Oh, it's definite this time . . . Ring me up later on . . . I'll tell you all about it, my people are here now to talk it over . . . Oh, there's only one thing to be done . . . Separation . . . Yes, I do . . . Later on, dear, later on—good-bye. (*She hangs up the receiver.*)

MRS. CHRISTIE. Brenda, dearest, don't keep me in suspense—tell me what has happened?

BRENDA (*suddenly*). Mother, am I neurotic?

MRS. CHRISTIE. What?

BRENDA. Am I hysterical, unhinged, nervous, imaginative, in need of a rest cure?

MRS. CHRISTIE. Brenda!

BRENDA. Am I changeable, capricious, unhappy, moody, fretful, wayward, extravagant?

MRS. CHRISTIE. I don't—

BRENDA. Do I drink? Have I spots on my face? Does my hair fall down in the street?

MRS. CHRISTIE. My dear child!

BRENDA. Do I nag? Do I wear impossible hats? Am I flat-footed? Do I get colds in the head? Have I a squint? Do I forget to order whisky and then say it was the Cook?

MRS. CHRISTIE. My dear, my dear!

BRENDA. Do I do any of these things?

MRS. CHRISTIE. No, dear, no!

BRENDA. Do I? Evangeline, (*shaking her*) do I?

EVANGELINE (*feigning terror*). No, dear, no.

BRENDA. Very well. Then answer me one question. Why is it that my husband ill treats me?

EVANGELINE (*incredulously*). Does he?

MRS. CHRISTIE (*shocked*). Oh, Brenda, he doesn't.

BRENDA (*walking passionately about the room*). I put aside that he's a poet; I knew that was against him

when I married him. He told me he might sometimes be irritable. I said I should quite understand. But, mother! But, Evangeline! He is never anything else!

MRS. CHRISTIE (*deprecatingly*). Oh, my dear!

BRENDA. You know how reasonable I am. When he found a pin in the pudding, or when I gave away three pairs of new pyjamas to the porter instead of the old ones, I understood his being cross. I said at once, "It's my fault, Freddie." He wasn't satisfied; but of course men are men. Those things a woman can overlook.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Perhaps, dearest, you expected too much of married life.

BRENDA. No, mother, no one shall ever accuse me of being romantic. I knew it was very prosaic and that I should probably get tired of Freddie's nose. I knew that marriage was difficult and all that, but I didn't know it was *unendurable*. (EVANGELINE *writes in a notebook.*) What are you doing, Evangeline?

EVANGELINE. I am only entering your opinion in my book.

BRENDA. Oh, that book! I'm sick of it.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Brenda, what exactly—?

BRENDA (*sitting beside her mother*). Well, mother, dear, I think I've shown you that I have been patient. I have put up with everything—never answered back.

EVANGELINE. Oh!

BRENDA. Well, hardly ever—I have been civil to his relations (who all ought to be smothered by rights), I've indulged his fancies—given up smoking—never read the *Daily Mail* serial—(until he's gone out)—but this I cannot and will not stand.

EVANGELINE. Brenda, we're awfully sorry for you, but we don't know yet what Freddie's done. I mean, what fresh atrocity—

MRS. CHRISTIE. No; ~~tell us, dear.~~

BRENDA. You wouldn't call Freddie handsome, would you?

EVANGELINE (*decidedly*). No!

BRENDA (*who is offended*). Well, you needn't be quite so dogmatic.

EVANGELINE. You *asked* me.

BRENDA. Mother, would you call Freddie a brilliant talker?

MRS. CHRISTIE (*hesitating*). Brilliant? Well, dear, so few people are that.

BRENDA. Still, he *might* be one of the few. Do you think he is?

MRS. CHRISTIE. No, I don't really.

BRENDA. No. Well, is he a celebrity?

EVANGELINE. Of course not.

BRENDA (*annoyed*). I didn't ask *you*, Evangeline.

EVANGELINE. Sorry. (*She withdraws from the discussion.*)

BRENDA. Well, mother?

MRS. CHRISTIE (*anxious to please*). Well, dear, he's very clever, and I'm sure in time——

BRENDA. Quite so—he's not a celebrity. Very well; then, what is he?

MRS. CHRISTIE (*helpless*). What is he?

BRENDA. Yes. Why is there to be all this fuss about him? Why are we all to smooth his path and wait upon him and think about nothing else all day long but his comfort?

EVANGELINE (*writing busily in her little book*). Why, indeed!

BRENDA. Well, mother?

MRS. CHRISTIE. I can't help thinking, dear, that I could be of more use if you would tell me just what has happened.

BRENDA. Use, my dearest! No one can be of use—except the solicitors.

MRS. CHRISTIE (*terrified, and going to her*). Brenda, you don't really mean——?

BRENDA. Yes, I do. (*A choke from EVANGELINE.*)

Oh, I know I have threatened it before, and you have talked me over, and I have weakly forgiven Freddie. But I have had enough of it. We're not living in early Victorian days. I shall get a separation without the slightest difficulty.

EVANGELINE. Have you seen Mr. Halkett yet, Brenda?

BRENDA. No, I am to see him at his office to-morrow. Oh, you needn't look so sceptical. I mean every word I say.

MRS. CHRISTIE (*crying by now*). Oh, Brenda, dearest.

BRENDA. Don't cry, mother, I can bear it. Every one knows nowadays that a husband and wife who no longer love each other have no right to remain together—

MRS. CHRISTIE. But, dear, wouldn't that make family life terribly uncertain?

BRENDA. It's better than sticking together to wrangle. In fact, it is better to be Evangeline, jotting down everything she hears about married life and adding it up like a sort of horrid sum before she makes up her mind what to do. It is better, I say, to be *Evangeline* than it is to be unhappily married.

EVANGELINE. Thank you.

MRS. CHRISTIE (*becoming tearful once more*). Oh dear, oh dear, I wish I'd lived in some other time. Things are so uncomfortable nowadays. And what will you do, my dear child? It will be such a strange position for you. You don't know how embarrassing it will be.

BRENDA. Not at all, mother dear. I shall come back and live with you.

(MRS. CHRISTIE *is much taken aback by this suggestion, but still affectionate.*)

MRS. CHRISTIE. Well, of course—that will be very nice—but, you see, Katherine does the housekeeping now, and we've turned your bedroom into a dark

room for the boys, and you never did get on with Aunt Fanny, did you?

BRENDA. These things will arrange themselves.

EVANGELINE. I can see Aunt Fanny arranging herself when she hears the news.

BRENDA. Trifles, trifles!

MRS. CHRISTIE. And you haven't told me yet what exactly has happened.

BRENDA. Well—— (*The telephone bell rings. BRENDA gives a snort of impatience and goes to it.*) Well—Well—yes? No, we are not the Universal Cab Company. No! (*The receiver is banged down as FREDDIE, a pale, quiet, reserved man of middle height, comes rather sheepishly into the room.*)

FREDDIE (*with nervous gaiety*). Mrs. Christie—Evangeline—Good morning!

BRENDA. Come to my room, mother.

(*MRS. CHRISTIE would have a word with FREDDIE, but BRENDA takes her off with much dignity.*)

FREDDIE. Well, Evangeline!

EVANGELINE. In it again?

FREDDIE. Again? I don't understand you. Brenda and I have agreed to separate. There is no question of again.

EVANGELINE. I see. Won't you tell me what's caused this rumpus—decision?

FREDDIE (*pointing to the telephone*). That!

EVANGELINE. What?

FREDDIE. The telephone.

EVANGELINE. Really?

FREDDIE. You see, it's like this, Evangeline. I hope no one can call me a conceited person. Still, I *am* a poet. What's more, I get my things *taken*—that is the test, isn't it?

EVANGELINE. Certainly——

FREDDIE (*he takes out a letter*). People write to me—strangers—they write and say (*reading*), "Dear sir, although I haven't the pleasure of knowing you per-

sonally, I must write and tell you what pleasure it has given me——”

EVANGELINE (*hastily*). I know the sort of thing.

FREDDIE. Last week I had a sonnet in *The Ladies' Little Heartsease*.

EVANGELINE. Yes, Freddie, I remember.

FREDDIE. So I think I may say I'm getting on?

EVANGELINE. Certainly you can, Freddie.

FREDDIE. Well, Evangeline, I don't pretend to be very artistic or anything of that sort, but you must have some quiet to write in. Now that thing—— (*The telephone bell.*) You see? (*Answering.*) Yes, yes, yes, this is 33940 Kensington. No, no, it is *not* the Cat's Home. No! (*He bangs down receiver.*) That's what happens all day. But she would have it, Evangeline, and she would have it put into *my room*—because the servants would hear what she said in the dining-room, it would spoil the look of the drawing-room, and the hall was too cold. So here I sit, Evangeline, and there *it* sits, ring, ring, ring. (*He sits and sinks his head in his hands.*)

EVANGELINE. Is it always for the Cat's Home?

FREDDIE. No, no, it's often for us, quite often. Brenda has dozens of friends. They ring her up every morning, to ask her if she's all right, what's she doing, if she can come to tea or go to a *matinée*. Then I have to go and get her. And she comes in and stands and talks and laughs, and all my ideas are gone.

EVANGELINE. Why don't you leave the receiver off?

FREDDIE. I've tried that. But they can make a sort of cracking which is almost as bad. And then they write—and complain, and Brenda finds out. Then there's a row. That's been our life for the last six weeks. Don't marry, Evangeline.

EVANGELINE (*getting out the notebook*). You advise me not to?

FREDDIE. Oh, undoubtedly. (*She writes.*) At least, not with a telephone. (*Advancing to her.*) What's that?

EVANGELINE. Only my book of pros and cons of matrimony.

FREDDIE. But are you still keeping it?

EVANGELINE. Oh, yes. I haven't collected nearly enough evidence yet.

FREDDIE. That part seems pretty full.

EVANGELINE. Yes, those are the cons. I got most of them at Cromer, *you know.* (*He does.*) I should like to have a few more pros; still I have twenty-three years to decide in.

FREDDIE. What?

EVANGELINE. Oh, yes. Forty is the best age for marrying nowadays. It is the age of romance. Every one marries at forty.

FREDDIE. But if they're married already?

EVANGELINE. Then they elope.

FREDDIE. Really! I wish *I* were forty. Oh, what am I to do about Brenda? I shall always be fond of her in a way, but we shall have to part. Lately my life's been a burden. There have been moments, Evangeline, when I have longed to die simply for the sake of quiet. Some green and peaceful resting-place— (*The telephone once again.*) Oh, that thing! (*He strides over to it.*) Yes . . . yes . . . yes? . . . Well, why don't you answer? . . . Well!! . . . Well!! Oh! . . . Oh! (*He thrusts the receiver back.*) You see what it is? Have I exaggerated? Am I getting neurotic, nervous, hysterical, in need of a rest cure?

EVANGELINE. No, no!

FREDDIE. Yes, I *am*, Evangeline! I *am*. You know yourself, Evangeline, that when we took this flat everything was done to please Brenda. Even this room, *my* room, was arranged the way she wanted it. I wished the desk in the window, she by the wall, there it is. I wanted brown, she green—you see! I liked the sofa there, she here; those ferns sicken me—her choice. I hate fancy cushion covers—look at these. I like a fire, she doesn't, so I shiver. I wanted

the water-colours this side, she that, there they hang. She leaves her clothes all over the place, and now to crown it all I have to endure the telephone! Now haven't I something to complain of?

EVANGELINE. Yes, I must say I think this time, Freddie—

FREDDIE. *This time?*

EVANGELINE. Oh, yes. (*Consulting her notebook and then showing him.*) You haven't always had such a clear conscience. Now last February you were playing Bridge at the Websters—Brenda was your partner—There were quite a lot of people looking on. She played the wrong card and you said, "Brenda, if you must be a fool, do at least be a quick fool and not a slow one." It wasn't very kind.

FREDDIE. No. I remember that. (*With sudden indignation.*) Do you keep a record of these things?

EVANGELINE. Only for my own guidance.

FREDDIE. Haven't you *anything* on the pro side?

EVANGELINE. Yes. Here they are. Arguments in favour of marriage. 1. "No one can say you haven't been asked."

2. "There is always some one in case of burglars."

3. "You can get a complete set of new clothes."

4. "You——" (*The telephone rings.*)

FREDDIE. You have a telephone! (*Goes to it.*) Yes, yes . . . (*Ironically.*) Yes, the telephone is all right this morning, thank you. It will be all right to-morrow morning. It is always all right every morning, thank you. . . . Don't mention it. It is so very kind of you. (*Speaking again to EVANGELINE.*) You see, Evangeline. Have I exaggerated? (*The telephone bell. He is speechless, he stands with his mouth open—then turns and tears the receiver off.*)

FREDDIE. Yes, it's still all right. It's even better than usual. Last night it seemed a little feverish, but it's quite well now. . . . What? Oh, you're Mrs. Gurnett? . . . Yes, Brenda is at home. . . . No, she won't come to the telephone. . . . Yes,

we're going to be divorced. Isn't it nice? . . .

(FREDDIE *throws the receiver down on the desk and drops his head on the desk.* EVANGELINE *comes to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.* As BRENDA enters. EVANGELINE *moves away.*)

BRENDA. I thought I heard the telephone——

FREDDIE. Impossible!

BRENDA. Didn't it ring?

FREDDIE. Did it, Evangeline?

BRENDA. I expected to hear from Mrs. Jack Gurnett. She has been so sympathetic. (*Neither speaks.*) Be good enough to let me know if she rings me up.

FREDDIE. Certainly. (BRENDA *goes out.*)

EVANGELINE. Brenda seems to have confided in several people.

FREDDIE. She has told every one. If there is one thing that ought to be sacred with married people, it is their disagreements. I have never discussed our difficulties with *any* living soul—except, of course, Tom Netherton and my dear old friend Stokes. However, there won't be anything to discuss—after this. Oh, why do people every marry?

EVANGELINE (*turning to her notebook*). 5. Companionship after the age of fifty. 6. If well off, dismissing chauffeurs and drunken butlers done by husband. 7. Some one to do up your blouse in the morning if travelling abroad——

FREDDIE. I don't want my blouse done up.

EVANGELINE. I beg your pardon—this is from the woman's point of view. (MRS. CHRISTIE *enters, crying.*) Dear Aunt Isabella!

MRS. CHRISTIE. Oh, my dears, it is really so dreadful! Brenda is quite determined. She means it this time.

FREDDIE. Of course she means it. So do I.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Will nothing move you, Freddie?

FREDDIE. Not unless the telephone is moved.

MRS. CHRISTIE. It won't be. Brenda has made up her mind. Besides, as she says, she has told so many people, she couldn't draw back now. (*The telephone rattles.*) It is very dreadful. (*The telephone rattles again.*)

EVANGELINE. I think, Freddie, that some one is trying to ring you up.

FREDDIE. Let them try. (*The rattle continues.*) Go on, go on! (*Coming to EVANGELINE.*) If you would only help me, Evangeline, I should be so grateful.

EVANGELINE. You mean help you to make it up?

MRS. CHRISTIE (*gratefully*). Dear Freddie!

FREDDIE. Yes, on condition that the telephone goes into the hall. Oh, Evangeline, do think of something. Something dignified, you know.

MRS. CHRISTIE. You couldn't try ringing the telephone all night, could you? So as to disgust her with it?

FREDDIE. It wouldn't.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Poor Brenda! The same as a child! It's Aunt Fanny I'm thinking of. What she will say—— (*She dabs her eyes with her handkerchief.*)

EVANGELINE. Well, Freddie, I've got an idea that *may* be of use.

FREDDIE. Bless you, Evangeline, what is it?

EVANGELINE. Well, you know Brenda has always been of rather a jealous disposition.

FREDDIE. Evangeline, don't say that your idea is that I am to make love to you—because I couldn't do it.

EVANGELINE. No, it's not that. I merely want you to rearrange the furniture in this room in the way you like it.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Dear child! What possible use can that be?

FREDDIE. I must say I don't see——

EVANGELINE. Well, it's my idea that will aggra-

vate Brenda so much that she'll want to stay if only to move it back again.

FREDDIE. Well?

MRS. CHRISTIE. We'll do it.

EVANGELINE. Come along then, Freddie.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Wait, I'll clear a space. (MRS. CHRISTIE moves a chair, and together, during the next few sentences, they alter the position of all the furniture.)

EVANGELINE. If she notices the telephone, tell her that's how it'll be when she's gone.

FREDDIE. All right.

EVANGELINE. The ferns ought to go out altogether.

FREDDIE. I'll take them. (FREDDIE takes the ferns and carries them from the room.)

EVANGELINE. What's Brenda doing all this time? (They move busily about, altering everything.)

MRS. CHRISTIE. She said she wouldn't come in till Freddie had gone. (FREDDIE comes back.)

EVANGELINE. Is that right, Freddie?

FREDDIE. No, the chair goes *here*. You know it is nicer, say what you will.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Oughtn't we to light the fire?

EVANGELINE. We can't, it isn't laid.

FREDDIE. All these go out of sight. (He moves slippers, veils, etc., to under the table.)

EVANGELINE. Didn't you say the blind up?

FREDDIE. Yes. That's about right. I can't stand that Art Nouveau vase.

EVANGELINE. Then take it away.

FREDDIE. And the Teddy Bear. (That he pitches out of the room.)

EVANGELINE. We mustn't stay very long after Brenda comes in—Aunt Isabel—

MRS. CHRISTIE. Very well, my dear. I can't say I feel at all hopeful.

FREDDIE. If Brenda only understood what it was to write! And, after all, I *am* getting on! Did I tell you about my sonnet in *Heartsease*?

MRS. CHRISTIE. Yes, Freddie, you did.

FREDDIE. Well, it was encouraging, wasn't it?
(*They ignore him.*)

EVANGELINE. It's all ready now.

FREDDIE. How wonderfully you've both remembered how I like the things.

EVANGELINE. Well, you've told us pretty often. Now for it. (*She goes to the door and calls BRENDA.*)
They all hastily take up position.

BRENDA (*answering from outside*). Yes.

EVANGELINE. We're going now.

BRENDA. Oh, must you? (*In a brief moment she comes in.*) Why, what on earth——

EVANGELINE. Freddie's just trying the room as he's going to have it when——

BRENDA. When I'm gone! I see! You've taken it in plenty of time, haven't you? You're evidently very anxious to get me out of the house.

FREDDIE. You know, Brenda, you don't understand what it is to be a poet. Now——

BRENDA. I have heard all that at least fifty times, thank you.

EVANGELINE. Don't you think the room looks rather nice?

BRENDA. The room makes me feel extremely pleased that I'm leaving it for ever.

MRS. CHRISTIE. Oh, why, my darling?

BRENDA. I thought Freddie had *some* taste, but now!

FREDDIE. Taste! Ha! ha! What do you know about taste, my dear Brenda? Look at your Art Nouveau vases! Look at your Teddy Bears!

BRENDA (*sweeping up the room*). Where is my Teddy Bear?

(*FREDDIE jumps out of the way.*)

EVANGELINE. Oh, we moved that outside just to get the general effect.

BRENDA. Oh, did you? How charming! How tactful! How like you, Evangeline!

EVANGELINE. I'm sorry you're annoyed, Brenda.

BRENDA. Annoyed! I'm delighted. It's so interesting to know what it'll be like.

FREDDIE. I can tell you one thing, it'll be—peaceful! I shall have room to breathe.

BRENDA. Perhaps you'll get another poem into *Heartsease*.

FREDDIE. Perhaps I shall when that telephone isn't banging away all day.

BRENDA. That reminds me—Excuse me, mother, I must ring up.—Why—why is the receiver off?

FREDDIE. I left it off.

BRENDA. What for?

FREDDIE. It will always be off in future.

BRENDA. Then let it be now. I'm going, I don't care—I'm going home——

MRS. CHRISTIE. Oh!

BRENDA. Yes. When I came in I was feeling half sorry that we had quarrelled, and I was willing to try and forgive Freddie. After all, I said to myself, he can't help being conceited and bad-tempered and nervous and small-minded and frightfully tiresome, neither can he help his nose. So I came in to make it up. But now, when I see how glad he is to get rid of me, so's he can turn the room upside down and like live a—coal-heaver, I'm not going to humble myself. Where's my hat? I'm going to Halkett at once! (*She flounces off, and continues speaking from another room.*) I'm sure I've done everything I can, but I defy any one to put up with Freddie. It's bad enough to marry a genius, but to marry some one who just *thinks* himself a genius and *isn't*, well, just try it, that's all. Where are my hat-pins? He'll find some one else to choose the bacon and worry about his veal cutlets and hot milk. (*There is a noise of boxes banging and drawers being opened and shut.*) Who has taken my hat-pins?

FREDDIE. Well, Evangeline, you *have* muddled it.

EVANGELINE. I'm very sorry, Freddie.

MRS. CHRISTIE. She meant it for the best, but Brenda is so uncertain.

BRENDA (*from the other room*). No one else would have put up with Freddie for so long. He drinks hot water at six o'clock in the morning, and comes into breakfast at ten—in bedroom slippers——

FREDDIE (*running to the door*). Be quiet, Brenda.

BRENDA (*still as before*). He gets bones in his throat every time he eats fish and chokes all through dinner, then he falls asleep till ten o'clock and says he's thinking about Shelley's poems—that's married life! He snores, he has a bath just before dinner and puts the cook in a temper, he uses my violet hair wash—and he wears bed-socks!

FREDDIE (*banging the door to*). I won't stand it! I won't!

MRS. CHRISTIE. Do come here, Evangeline! I know I'm going to have hysterics.

EVANGELINE (*going to her aunt*). I shall take Aunt Isabel home, Freddie. She isn't strong enough for these scenes.

FREDDIE. Do whatever you like.

EVANGELINE. I'll come back afterwards, if I can be of any use.

FREDDIE. Thanks.

EVANGELINE. Ask Brenda to wait for me. Come, Aunt Isabel.

MRS. CHRISTIE (*in tears*). Good-bye, my dear boy. I am very grieved, most unhappy. It seemed so ideal. The wedding presents were so beautiful. Lots of people have too many apostle spoons, but yours were just right. She was such a pretty bride and every one admired the cake—and now it's all spoilt, the icing lasted for months! Oh dear, oh dear!

(*She is led out, weeping. Left alone, FREDDIE sits, strokes the cushion, smiles, rises, and finally puts a picture straight. It then dawns upon him that the room looks very nice. He contemplates it with satis-*

faction. BRENDA re-enters dressed for walking, and carrying a small dressing-bag.)

BRENDA. Oh! Alone, are you? Where are the others?

FREDDIE. Gone!

BRENDA. Indeed! They might have waited for me!

FREDDIE. You won't change your mind, I suppose, Brenda?

BRENDA. On what condition?

FREDDIE. That the telephone goes in the hall——

BRENDA. Never!

FREDDIE. Oh, all right. *(He sinks into chair by the fireplace. BRENDA goes out. She stumbles over something in the doorway. It is the Teddy Bear. She picks it up and looks at it, and then round the room. She places the bear outside, then shuts the door. After looking all round the room again, she comes a step nearer.)*

BRENDA. Good-bye, Freddie.

FREDDIE *(jumping up)*. Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you'd gone! Good-bye!

BRENDA. Good-bye. *(There is a pause.)* Where did you say the others were?

FREDDIE. Your mother wanted to have hysterics, so Evangeline is taking her home.

BRENDA. I must say a more interfering person than Evangeline I have never met.

FREDDIE. Because she is taking your mother home?

BRENDA. Oh, of course you would stick up for her. You always did. I call her a mischief-maker.

FREDDIE. What?

BRENDA. Certainly. Who started this quarrel between you and me? I'd like to know. Evangeline!

FREDDIE. My dear Brenda!

BRENDA. Of course she did. She loves seeing

people unhappy. Then she can put it down in her horrid little book, and console herself for being an old maid. When they came in to see me this morning I certainly was a little annoyed, but it was what Evangeline said that really upset me.

FREDDIE. What did she say?

BRENDA. She said you couldn't write and never would, that you'd never be a success, that you had ceased to care for me, and that people who didn't love each other ought not to live together.

FREDDIE. She had no right to say that, Brenda. It's most improper. But your mother's remark was even worse.

BRENDA. What did mother say?

FREDDIE. Why, that the whole thing was a failure and we ought never to have married. I think it was most unkind.

BRENDA. If only people would mind their own business! What on earth has it to do with them? If they hadn't come poking round here every other day it would have been better for all of us.

FREDDIE. I believe you're right. We might have got on perfectly well if we had only been left to ourselves.

BRENDA. I believe we should. Fancy, Evangeline said that you were always committing fresh atrocities!

FREDDIE. Evangeline is no critic!

BRENDA. And that no one could possibly call you handsome. I stuck up for you!

FREDDIE. Thank you, Brenda. Your mother, too, you know, is hardly tactful. She more than hinted that nobody wanted you back at home and that you couldn't get on with any one.

BRENDA. That's just the sort of thing she *would* say!

FREDDIE. She added that you had a sort of surface attraction, but it didn't last.

BRENDA (*violently*). Did you agree with her?

FREDDIE (*quickly*). No, no, my darling.

BRENDA. My dear Freddie, there's not the slightest doubt of one thing.

FREDDIE. What's that?

BRENDA. This terrible state of affairs has been brought about by mother and Evangeline.

FREDDIE. I wonder if it's so. Now I think of it, it was Evangeline who made me move the furniture.

BRENDA. I *thought* as much.

FREDDIE. I begged her not to. I knew you wouldn't like it. It needn't have been done till after our separation.

BRENDA. How sweet of you, Freddie! Besides, the furniture could soon have been moved back if only things had been different. (*She looks meaningly at him.*)

FREDDIE. Well, yes, I suppose it could.

BRENDA. Of course I couldn't think of doing it now. (*A pause.*) Only we might perhaps just change these pictures. (*She does so.*)

FREDDIE (*at once helping her*). Oh, yes, they won't make much difference.

BRENDA. Although I'm not going to be here, I should like to think that *something* looked the same as when I was here. (*While his back is turned she puts on the cushion covers again.*)

FREDDIE. So it shall, Brenda, I promise you.

BRENDA. Only you'll forget what it did look like when I am gone.

FREDDIE. Never, darling.

BRENDA. Perhaps this table now, (*He moves the desk with her*) or my little Teddy Bear——

FREDDIE. I'll get it. (*He fetches it from outside.*)

FREDDIE. You knew I never should have touched anything yet, Brenda, only Evangeline insisted.

BRENDA (*continuing to replace the furniture as it originally was*). Of course, I'm very fond of Evangeline, but she's dreadfully spiteful, and then poor mother——

FREDDIE. It was your mother who suggested I should ring the telephone all night so as to disgust you.

BRENDA. Dear, dear ! If you'll put my vase here, Freddie, I'll take it away with me——

FREDDIE. Yes, dear. (*He goes out and she hastily pulls the settee into its former position before he comes back.*)

BRENDA. Now, I suppose they would say that they had not the slightest intention of making mischief——

FREDDIE. I dare say they would.

BRENDA (*still at work*). And yet they have dragged us into a fearful muddle—made me tell all sorts of people——

FREDDIE. And ruined both our lives.

BRENDA. How strange to think that they can. Poor mother's tactlessness and Evangeline's spite separate us for ever !

FREDDIE. Yes, for ever.

BRENDA. Evangeline has even broken up my pretty little room, which was all you had to remember me by ; but perhaps some day, Freddie, you may think of me kindly once again.

FREDDIE. I know I shall often think of you, Brenda——often.

BRENDA (*picking up the slippers*). I shall put these here to remind you—and you will say, " She liked it," and leave it so.

FREDDIE. Oh, Brenda !

BRENDA. Perhaps just the blind——

FREDDIE. Of course ! (*He pulls down the blind which EVANGELINE had altered.* BRENDA looks round and sees with satisfaction that the room is now as it was at the beginning of the play.)

BRENDA. What a tragedy this is for every one except Evangeline. She, of course, will be delighted.

FREDDIE. Yes. She will write it all down in that confounded little book.

BRENDA. Freddie ! Why should we do it ?

Why should Evangeline triumph and mother say,
"I told you so?"

FREDDIE. Why, indeed?

BRENDA. Freddie! Listen to me! You shall have the room just as it is now! I will never alter it again!

FREDDIE (*who is vaguely unconscious of anything in the room*). Brenda, you don't mean it.

BRENDA. I do.

FREDDIE. Thank you, dear—Thank you

BRENDA. So let's—let's make it up!

FREDDIE. Really?

BRENDA. Yes. Will you?

FREDDIE. Will I? My darling Brendakin

(They embrace and the telephone bell rings.)

FREDDIE (*raising his head*). Oh, that telephone!
(Puts his head down again.)

(Telephone rings again and again—three times in all.)

BRENDA (*raising her head*). I'll have it put in the hall to-morrow! *(Puts her head down.)*

The CURTAIN falls.

ACID DROPS

"Acid Drops" was produced at the Royalty Theatre, London, on February 28th, 1914, under the management of Messrs. Vedrenne and Eadie.

CHARACTERS

MRS. PRICE, a sharp-featured, ill-natured, middle-aged Woman

MRS. TAYLOR, a buxom, round-faced, amiable Woman

MRS. DENT, a Woman who sits with her apron over her head

ALICE, a young Woman who has fits

MRS. GILBERT, a very old Woman with beautiful white hair

FLORA CAVAN, the Visitor

THE REV. NOEL CUTHBERTSON, the Clergyman

SCENE.—A ward in the Workhouse.

If any difficulty is experienced in obtaining so many beds,
only two are *essential*—Mrs. Gilbert's and Mrs. Price's

ACID DROPS

The scene is a workhouse ward for women. It is a plain room with whitewashed walls and a door at each end. Against the wall are five beds of uniform size. Next to each bed is a chair. In the chairs are sitting MRS. DENT, MRS. PRICE, ALICE, MRS. TAYLOR, and MRS. GILBERT (lies in bed). The women are all dressed alike in print gowns, plaid shawls and large white caps. MRS. TAYLOR is knitting.

MRS. TAYLOR. What day of the week is it, Mrs. Price?

MRS. PRICE. Wednesday, o' course.

MRS. TAYLOR. Happen Miss Cavan'll come in, this bein' her day.

MRS. PRICE. Not her. She'll have somethin' better to do than putting 'erself about to see us.

MRS. TAYLOR. Why, Mrs. Price, I take it to be a nice little treat for 'er—that I do. Only last week she sez to me, "I *am* glad to see you, Mrs. Taylor," she sez.

MRS. PRICE. Don't you be took in by none of that clapper, Mrs. Taylor. She comes 'ere to see the Parson, that's 'er game.

MRS. TAYLOR. Oh!

MRS. PRICE. Not that I've anything against 'er for it. Every one's a right to fight their own battle, and she couldn't pick up another young man in any great hurry.

MRS. TAYLOR. Well, she's getting onwards, I

don't deny it. She must be touching twenty-five or thereabouts. I'd had my fourth when I was 'er age.

MRS. PRICE. And she's no great catch to look at neither. (*Bridling.*) There's many as 'ud be better thought on than her, if dressed up in the same fancy style.

MRS. TAYLOR. That's true. Still I'd as soon see 'er as not, more partikler if she brings a book or some acid drops to pass the time.

MRS. PRICE. She haven't got a very nice idea of 'ow to 'old up a conversation. What do you think she asked me two weeks ago—(*MRS. TAYLOR stops her knitting*)—why it was Mrs. Dent always kep' her apron over her head.

MRS. TAYLOR. Very interferin'. (*She goes on knitting.*)

MRS. PRICE. Ah, indeed! And a nasty sort of suspiciousness, too. Like as if there was anything the matter with Mrs. Dent. Why, she can make as good a show as Miss Flora any day. And if she 'as a fancy to veil 'erself like a turkey, wot business is it of anybody's?

MRS. TAYLOR. What did you answer Miss Flora?

MRS. PRICE. "My dear," I sez, "those things are made so, and 'tis better to leave them as such."

MRS. GILBERT. They climbed the steep ascent of Heaven

In sorrow, toil and pain;

To us, O Lord, may grace be given

To follow in their train.

MRS. PRICE. Old Gilbert's wandering again.

ALICE. She's right enough, Mrs. Price. That's a bit of comfort to her.

MRS. PRICE. It's far from being a bit of comfort to me. I call that sort of thing immodest. She's a bit soft and ought to go elsewhere.

MRS. TAYLOR. I don't take it so, Mrs. Price. I'm sure she's got as much sense as most people that's

going about. Why, just look at Mr. Cuthbertson.

MRS. PRICE. Ah, but he's a clergyman. He's paid for that sort of thing. They do say that he and the doctors are clearing out the wards fine. Two died in No. 4 last week and three in No. 1. Thank 'Evin they can't get rid of me so easily. I must say I never felt better. I shouldn't wonder, though, if Mrs. Gilbert wasn't disposed of this week. It's to make room for the full time of year.

MRS. TAYLOR. That's so. But I doubt if it'll be the doctors nor Parson that's responsive for Mrs. Gilbert. She's well stricken in years. Over ninety, I'm told.

MRS. GILBERT (*in shrill piping tones*). I'm a hundred and one, my dears, all but four days, and have got my hearing as good as new yet, praise the Lord.

ALICE. That's true. She hears everything.

MRS. GILBERT. I do hopes I live till Sunday. I'm not afeard to go, my dears, but I'd mightily like to be a hundred and one. It's a grand thing for any fambily to have in remembrance. I mind a power of things that happened that no one else would tell of. There's Generals and Kings would gather round my bedside if they knowed what I've seen. Why, I mind when Farmer Porter's farm was no bigger than a cattleshed, and other marvels which no one else can tell of.

MRS. PRICE. She's rambling.

ALICE. That she's not, Mrs. Price. She knows what she's saying as well as you or me.

MRS. PRICE. Don't you try and sort your betters, Alice Jones! You seems ter think that because you has fits you're every one.

ALICE (*aggressively*). No, I don't.

MRS. PRICE. Then you be a little bit more becoming, or I'll speak to Nurse about you.

ALICE. You think yourself the Emperor of this ward, Mrs. Price. Nurse said the other day you had a tongue like a vile.

don't deny it. She must be touching twenty-five or thereabouts. I'd had my fourth when I was 'er age.

MRS. PRICE. And she's no great catch to look at neither. (*Bridling.*) There's many as 'ud be better thought on than her, if dressed up in the same fancy style.

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shut the window

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puts her head out.)

g to Miss Flora.

doesn't beat all !

courting on. I shall

es into the room again.)

ing in properness, that

goings. (Eagerly.) Put

what's going on. (ALICE

bass voice from beneath the
 vers her head). It's strange
 some people can take in other

MRS. PRICE. Did she indeed? I'll report her to the Master for it. Tongue like a vile indeed, and she a Roman Catholic!

MRS. TAYLOR. You can't report 'er for *that*, Mrs. Price——

MRS. PRICE. Well, I can say she's let the rain in on us, can't I? Some of you've got no spirit.

(The clock strikes three.)

MRS. TAYLOR. There's three. I don't believe Miss Flora's comin' after all.

MRS. PRICE. I should think you could make do without her for once, Mrs. Taylor.

MRS. TAYLOR. Well, well. *(Sighs.)* It's a kind of break, and she might bring us a book and an acid-drop or pep'mint, and if she stops too long I always got a way of partin' with her.

MRS. PRICE. What might that be?

MRS. TAYLOR. I offers to show her my bad leg.

MRS. PRICE. I didn't know you 'ad one—not to show.

MRS. TAYLOR. Nor I 'ave, but it answers. *(She rises.)* I think I'll go and sit with Mrs. Dixon a bit, if Alice'll give me an arm.

ALICE. That I gladly will. *(She comes to her and helps her.)*

MRS. TAYLOR. You'll call me the very minute Miss Flora comes, Mrs. Price.

MRS. PRICE. Oh, certainly. You can always rely on me, Mrs. Taylor.

MRS. TAYLOR *(stopping and looking at MRS. PRICE with suspicion)*. I 'ope so, I'm sure.

(MRS. TAYLOR moves slowly down on ALICE's arm till she reaches the end of MRS. GILBERT's bed.)

MRS. GILBERT. A safe journey to ye, my dear.

MRS. TAYLOR. Thank ye kindly, Mrs. Gilbert. How are you feeling?

MRS. GILBERT. I'm nicely, thank you, Mrs. Taylor.

praise the Lord. I'm hoping to live another four days. I shall be a hundert and one year old come Sunday, and that'll be somethin' for my grandchildren to boast over. I ain't never bin able to leave them anythin' else, but that'll be a help to them in life.

MRS. TAYLOR. No doubt it will.

MRS. GILBERT. Is that young lady coming to-day, Mrs. Taylor?

MRS. TAYLOR. It's almost past her time, I fancy. Well, I must get on to the Day-room. I'm glad you're easier to-day. (*She goes out with ALICE.*)

ALICE (*as she goes*). I'll be back in a minute, Mrs. Gilbert.

MRS. GILBERT. Every one's wonnerful good to me in this place.

MRS. PRICE. She's wanting. (*Takes snuff.*) I thought I heard Parson's voice on the stairs. I hope he isn't coming in here to-day out of his order. There's none going to-day, that he need be poking about. Alice! Alice! (*ALICE returns.*) Alice, look and see if that's Parson, and if 'tis get my Bible out. Be quick.

ALICE (*going to door*). 'Tisn't his day.

MRS. PRICE. No, but when Nurse shut the window last night I saw the new moon through the glass, and sez I, my luck's out. (*ALICE puts her head out.*)

MRS. PRICE. Well, is it?

ALICE. Yes, 'tis. He's talking to Miss Flora.

MRS. PRICE. Well, if that doesn't beat all! Taking our stairs to do their courting on. I shall tell the Master of it. (*ALICE comes into the room again.*) It's not seemly. She's wanting in properness, that she is. I don't like such doings. (*Eagerly.*) Put your 'ead out, Alice, and see what's going on. (*ALICE does so.*)

MRS. DENT (*in a deep bass voice from beneath the apron which completely covers her head*). It's strange what a deal of interest some people can take in other people's concerns.

MRS. PRICE. Indeed, Mrs. Dent, have you found it so?

MRS. DENT. By observation, I 'ave.

MRS. PRICE. There's people 'ose ways and manners I like, and there's people 'ose ways and manners I can't abide. I name no names.

MRS. DENT. It's not these places themselves one object to, it's the people one mixes with when one's bin used to better days. I name no names.

(ALICE returns.)

ALICE. Oh, Mrs. Price, they're having words.

MRS. PRICE. No—are they? What did they say?

ALICE. I couldn't quite catch.

MRS. DENT. I could a told you long ago that the courtin' was brought to nothing.

ALICE. Why?

MRS. PRICE. 'Ow's that, Mrs. Dent?

MRS. DENT. On account of 'im bein' 'Igh Church and 'er Low.

ALICE. Wot's that mean?

MRS. DENT. It's somethin' to do with candles. He says 'ave them, and she don't want 'em, so it's caused a dispute.

MRS. PRICE. 'Ow did you 'ear all this, Mrs. Dent?

MRS. DENT. My son cleans the winders at Eaton Place, where Miss Flora lives, and the 'ousemaid passed the word along to him.

ALICE. Fancy disputin' about 'avin' candles. I thought it was all electric light nowadays.

MRS. PRICE. She'll be a fool if she lets gibble gabble like that stand in the way. He's 'er only chance, and that's a fact.

ALICE. Mind. (She goes to her seat.)

(FLORA enters. She is a pretty young woman of five-and-twenty, well dressed, bright and charming. At present she seems a little upset owing to her having

met the curate on the stairs. She shuts the door very quickly and advances to the first bed.)

FLORA (to MRS. DENT). Good afternoon, Mrs. Dent.

(MRS. DENT *does not reply*. FLORA, *embarrassed*, goes on to MRS. PRICE.)

FLORA. Good afternoon, Mrs. Price, and how are you to-day?

MRS. PRICE (*in lamentable tones*). Very poorly, miss, and that's a fact. My rheumatism is crool bad, besides the old trouble being worse than ever.

FLORA. Oh, I *am* sorry, Mrs. Price. I did hope this nice fine day you would be feeling better.

MRS. PRICE. Ah, miss. Fine is as fine does, so the saying is.

FLORA. You're *looking* very well.

MRS. PRICE. Ah, that's nothin' to go by, miss. A 'igh flush runs in our fambily. Why, my mother had this colour in her coffin.

FLORA. Oh! Well, here's a paper for you to look at—and I've one for Mrs. Taylor too. Isn't she here?

MRS. PRICE (*in a low voice*). She's gone out for the day, miss, to see her son that's going to be married. If you'll leave the book, miss, I'll keep it for her.

FLORA. Very well, and there's a few acid-drops for you too, Mrs. Price, and a packet for Mrs. Taylor, and one for Mrs. Dent.

MRS. PRICE. I'll take charge of that too, miss.

FLORA. All right, there it is.

MRS. PRICE. And 'ow 'ave you bin, miss?

FLORA. Very well, thank you. (*Sighs.*)

MRS. PRICE. You're looking sadly worn and tired. Maybe you're fretting over something?

FLORA. Oh, no, I've nothing to fret over.

MRS. PRICE. Ah well, we can't none of us be as young as we was, can we? You'll be thinking of settling down soon, miss, I expect.

FLORA. No, Mrs. Price, I shall never marry.

MRS. PRICE. Oh, you mustn't say *that*, miss. It don't do to lose 'eart altogether. I've 'eard of older than you getting 'usbands. My sister's brother-in-law married a woman well stricken—close on thirty, she was.

FLORA. So you think there's a chance for me?

MRS. PRICE. Well, say what you will, miss, queer things do 'appen.

FLORA. But we don't all *want* to get married nowadays, Mrs. Price.

MRS. PRICE. No? I've 'eard that's going about, but p'raps it's a question of the right man.

FLORA. But supposing we don't even meet the right man? Or suppose we think he's right and he turns out wrong?

MRS. PRICE. It don't do to be too partikler. My 'usband 'ad a 'orrible squint, and 'is mother was a caution. But there's some who don't even get *that* chance. Hanging back's a mistake, miss.

FLORA (*changing the subject*). Would you like me to read you something?

MRS. PRICE. Ah, dearly I should. Alice'll get the book. Alice! Just fetch the Bible. (ALICE *goes out*.) While she's getting it, Miss, I'd just like to show you my ankle; you'd never believe the colour it is.

FLORA (*getting up*). Yes, well, I'm afraid I mustn't wait to-day. I'll read to you some other time. I suppose it's no use my speaking to Mrs. Dent?

MRS. PRICE. No use at all, miss; she wouldn't thank you.

FLORA. Then I'll go on to Alice.

MRS. PRICE. Excuse me, miss. (*She beckons to her to bend down. FLORA does so.*) This is one of Alice's fitty days. It's best to take no notice of her, or she might fall down without hardly a word of warning.

FLORA. Oh! Then I'd better not worry her.

MRS. PRICE. I shouldn't, miss. Not to-day. You can leave the books and peppermints along of me,

and I'll give them over at the first good chance I see.

FLORA. Very well. *(She gives them.)* Good day, Mrs. Price.

MRS. PRICE. Good day, miss, and thank you very kindly.

(FLORA walks along the row of beds, passing ALICE very quickly, and comes to MRS. GILBERT'S. ALICE, who enters at this moment, shows surprise at being left out, then crosses to MRS. PRICE with the Bible.)

FLORA. Good afternoon, Mrs. Gilbert, and how are you to-day?

MRS. GILBERT. I'm wonnerful hearty to-day, thank you, missie, and very glad to see you, that I am. I felt sure you'd not forget me to-day. Next time you come, if the Lord spares me, I shall be a hundert and one, and that's an honourable thing for a mortal woman.

FLORA. It is, indeed.

MRS. GILBERT. And I mind my young days as well as ever I did, missie. There's things that pass me now I don't set store by, kings and crownings and lections and such like. I never did lay hold on those and I don't see 'em very plain. But I mind the days when I was a maid as clear as yesterday. In Kent it were—nigh to Benenden; maybe you've been there?

FLORA. No, I haven't.

MRS. GILBERT. Ah well, there's many knows it. And I mind one day in May month when Jim spoke to me first. "You're my little lass now, ain't you?" he sez, and I sez, "Yes, Jim." There was a wonnerful blue sky that day, I mind, and a great singing of birds, and the blossoms was somethin' fine. There's not many can remember as fur as that, my dear, nor see the apple orchard as plain as I can now. The Lord's been wonnerful good to me, and He'll be the

same to you, my dear. Parson, he tells us it's true, and he's a good man.

FLORA. Yes. (*She looks embarrassed.*)

MRS. GILBERT. I've been hoping to see him to-day. (*The REV. NOEL, a good-looking young curate, enters. FLORA rises from her chair.*) And there he comes on the word.

REV. NOEL. Good day, Mrs. Gilbert. Oh, Miss Cavan, I'm sorry, I thought you'd gone.

FLORA (*simultaneously*). I beg your pardon, I didn't know you'd be here so soon.

REV. NOEL. It doesn't matter; I'll come later on.

FLORA. Oh no, really—please, I couldn't.

REV. NOEL. I've got two other visits to pay, so I'll—I'll pay them, don't you know.

FLORA. Oh, but it'll worry you.

REV. NOEL. My convenience is yours, you know that.

FLORA. I know it used to be.

REV. NOEL. It is.

FLORA. How can it, when over such a very little matter——

REV. NOEL. A principle!

FLORA. Oh, please don't preach.

REV. NOEL. Preach? Oh, my dear, as if I could ever preach to you or any one (*smiling*) unless I were protected by the pulpit.

FLORA. You can't expect me to believe in everything you do.

REV. NOEL. I only ask you not to laugh at my beliefs.

FLORA. I *didn't* laugh. (*He looks at her.*) I *didn't* laugh. (*A pause.*) I only smiled.

REV. NOEL. It means so much to me. Won't you let me explain it to you? I——

FLORA. It's no use. We shouldn't ever agree—about this or anything. I've thought it all out—and it's far better for us to realize it now than later on. If you can make a fuss over such a little thing——

NOEL. It is *not* a little thing !

FLORA. 'Sh ! (*They both look round.*) We don't see things the same size, that's all.

REV. NOEL. You mean I'm a prig.

FLORA. I mean you ought to cultivate a sense of proportion.

REV. NOEL. Long words don't make it sound any kinder.

FLORA. They are all listening. I'll leave the room until you've finished here.

REV. NOEL. No, no, I'll go, since you won't even stay in the same room with me.

FLORA. Not at all, I'll go. (*They go out simultaneously, he at one end, she at the other.*)

MRS. PRICE. I lost a good deal of what they said.

MRS. DENT. I 'eard.

ALICE. I can't think why Miss Flora never came near me. I don't grudge Mrs. Gilbert, still, she might have passed me the time of day.

MRS. PRICE. She's got other things to think over besides attending to you. She's afraid of letting the Parson slip through her fingers, that's the trouble. Not that he's much of a catch, for I dare say he's nothing but a pauper.

MRS. DENT. You're as wrong as can be, Mrs. Price, for he's rich as Methuselah.

MRS. PRICE. How did you 'ear that ?

MRS. DENT. Window cleaner.

MRS. PRICE. Oh, to be sure.

ALICE. I think Miss Flora must have somethin' against me, for she never passed me by like that before.

MRS. PRICE. That's what she is, time servin'. Don't you fret.

(MRS. TAYLOR enters, hobbling on her stick and much out of breath.)

MRS. TAYLOR. I've 'eard tell that Miss Flora's bin 'ere and givin' out books and me never fetched—

wot's the meanin' of it? Why 'aven't you sent for me, Mrs. Price?

MRS. PRICE. Well, there, Mrs. Taylor, you give me quite a turn——

MRS. TAYLOR. I can't 'elp your turn. What's the meanin' of it, that's what I want to know.

MRS. PRICE. Well, Mrs. Taylor, me, as you know, can't never 'ope to walk as far agen, Mrs. Gilbert's bedridden and by partikler favour is here at all, Mrs. Dent don't go on messages, and 'oo was I to send?

MRS. TAYLOR. You could 'ave sent Alice.

MRS. PRICE. Alice was set on havin' speech with Miss Flora. I was afraid to spoil the girl's chances.

MRS. TAYLOR. What a lot of fiddle faddle. I'm not a-going to be stuffed up with all that tale, Mrs. Price, that I'm not. Miss Flora's bin 'ere, no one allowed to see 'er but you—you've the command 'ere seemingly.

MRS. PRICE. What a lot of fuss all over nothing. If you want ter know the truth about the 'ole affair I'll tell yer.

MRS. TAYLOR AND ALICE. Well?

MRS. PRICE. Miss Flora's not quite 'erself to-day. She's gone and lost the Parson!

ALL. Lost the Parson!

MRS. PRICE. True as I'm 'ere——

MRS. TAYLOR. Well, if that ain't extremely careless! At 'er time of life to 'ave a nice little chance like that, and then to throw it away!

ALICE. She's made a very great mistake, that she 'as.

MRS. TAYLOR. 'Ow did you happen to 'ear so much of it?

MRS. PRICE. 'Ear? Didn't they use this very room as a battling ground? Stood just here, they did, and used high words. "Don't you address language like that to me," sez he. "You be off," sez she, "for I wouldn't inhabitate the same globe if I could help it"—and off they went, out of the ward.

MRS. TAYLOR. Dear, dear, I'm sorry I missed a treat like that.

ALICE. I'm sorry for Miss Flora—that I am.

MRS. GILBERT. Miss Flora! I want Miss Flora.

MRS. TAYLOR. All the same, this don't explain to me why Miss Flora didn't bring nothin' in the way of a acid-drop or a pep'mint, nor why Mrs. Price didn't make shift to send word to me of what was goin' on.

MRS. PRICE. 'Aven't I told you——?

ALICE. 'Sh! She's coming back.

(FLORA enters.)

MRS. GILBERT. Is that you, Miss Flora?

FLORA. Yes, Mrs. Gilbert.

MRS. GILBERT. Sit by me a minute, will you, my dear? (FLORA *does so*.)

FLORA. Of course I will, but I thought Mr. Cuthbertson was here.

MRS. GILBERT. No, no, my dear, he went away when you did.

FLORA. Oh!

MRS. GILBERT. I've been turning over just a few things in my mind, as I've bin lyin' here; I've been thinkin' over my life's doings, and 'ow wonnerful blessed I've bin. Them that's young and 'asty don't always know the joyfulness of life. When I was a girl I 'ad Jim, but I didn't 'ardly realize it, not till I lost him. We never got married, Jim and me. We was courtin' in the spring, same as I told you—then came the fruit season. We was picking the cherries, Jim and me, and we fell out, and I spoke 'arshly to him. Jim was alwuz quick to take hurt. "Then it's good-bye," he sez to me at last. "You'll never see me no more," he sez, and off he goes down the long road that led to Cranbrook. I wouldn't call after 'im, my dear, for I was 'ard of 'eart those days, but I climbed up to my little bedroom winder

that I could see the road from, hopin' he'd come back.

FLORA. And did he?

MRS. GILBERT. No, dearie. He never come back again—never. I looked down that long road many a day, but 'twas all in vain. It giv me a sort of feelin' even now to think of it, tho' Jim's bin dead and gone many a long year. I married in my time, and my man turned out proper enough; but somehow I'm thinkin' it'll be Jim that'll meet me when I've crossed the other side. "You're my little lass now," he'll say, and I'll say, "Yes, Jim." (*Pause.*) I've often wished when I 'ear of young folks falling out that they could 'ear tell of those many times I climbed up to my little winder, for, thinks I, they'd never want to do the like. There, there, my dear, why you're crying.

FLORA. No, no, it's all right, it's only I begin to think—I've been foolish about something. I—you look tired, Mrs. Gilbert, can't I fetch Nurse?

MRS. GILBERT. No, my dear, but there's something you can do for me and welcome.

FLORA. What's that?

MRS. GILBERT. Why, if you'd kindly tell Mr. Cuthbertson I'd be glad to see him before he goes—no hurry—but before he goes—tell him yourself, dear.

FLORA. I will.

MRS. TAYLOR. He's in No. 5, Miss Flora.

FLORA. Thank you. (*She goes out.*)

MRS. TAYLOR. They'll make it up now.

MRS. PRICE. Seemingly.

ALICE. She hasn't once spoke to me, not a word. It isn't like Miss Flora. Nor she hasn't left me a book, though she 'ad 'er 'ands full of 'em.

MRS. TAYLOR. Did she now? Well, that leaves me 'mazed. 'Ands full! She 'asn't taken any to No. 5. Whatever on earth 'as she done with 'em all?

MRS. DENT (*from behind her apron*). I can tell you what, Mrs. Taylor. Mrs. Price has bin and took all the books and all the acid-drops what Miss Flora

brought for the lot of us, and she's stowed 'em all away!

MRS. TAYLOR. Never!

ALICE. Well!—I——

MRS. TAYLOR. So that's it. I 'ad a sort of presentment, but, sez I, it can't be true.

MRS. DENT. It's 'ardly the action of a lady, but I can't say I'm surprised.

ALICE. She done it pretty quiet, for I never saw a thing.

MRS. DENT. There ain't much I don't see.

MRS. PRICE. Gabble, gabble, gabble, and not a word of truth in it from beginning to end.

MRS. TAYLOR. In that case, you won't mind our 'avin' a look?

MRS. PRICE. Look where you please. Such an insult has never been played on me before as to be searched. (*They all look.*) But you'll be sorry for this one and all, that you will. (*They look under the mattress.*) There's not much you'll find there, only my Bible. That's the bit of apple my sister left me. P'raps you'll accuse me of *that*, or the photograph of me aunt? Or that pair of woolly mats I'm making? Or the new-laid egg me uncle left? And now you've got me bit of tinned salmon! (*They produce each as named.*)

MRS. TAYLOR. It's not 'ere, Mrs. Dent.

MRS. DENT. Try the pillow-case. (*They shake the pillow-case; the numerous small packets of pepper-mints fall out.*)

MRS. TAYLOR. Well, I never!

MRS. DENT. I told yer as much.

ALICE. Well, ter think of it!

MRS. TAYLOR. It's caught me right 'ere, that it 'ave. The deceiving woman!

MRS. PRICE (*weeping*). I never bin treated so in all my life. I shall tell Nurse.

ALICE. Tell Nurse! Why I never 'eard such a thing.

MRS. TAYLOR. Miss Flora! That's the one ter know.

MRS. PRICE. You speak to Miss Flora, that's all, you try!

ALICE. 'Ush! 'Ere they come—wait a bit. *(The women group themselves quietly, their backs to audience, while FLORA and NOEL enter.)*

FLORA. Noel, I'd awfully like to tell Mrs. Gilbert about us. You don't mind?

NOEL. Of course I don't. I should love her to know. Why, I shall be grateful to her as long as I live.

FLORA. That's sweet of you. Mrs. Gilbert—Mrs. Gilbert!

MRS. GILBERT. Eh?

FLORA. I've come to tell you something. It's this—that I'm going to marry Mr. Cuthbertson, and I'm awfully happy, and it's all because of you—I can't tell you how grateful I am.

MRS. GILBERT *(slowly, her mind back in the past)*. It's a wonnerful year for blossoms, Jim; that old apple tree in father's orchard is like somethin' out of Paradise, that it is——

FLORA. Why, she doesn't know me, Noel. *(He hushes her.)*

MRS. GILBERT. Wonnerful blossoms that was, but the fruit never come to much arter all. "Where are you going Jessie?" "I'm just goin' up to my room, mother, to look along that bit of road. Who knows? Happen I might see Jim comin'."

FLORA. Mrs. Gilbert?

MRS. GILBERT *(rousing herself)*. Is that you, my dear?

FLORA. Yes, Mrs. Gilbert, it's Flora.

MRS. GILBERT. Good-bye, my dear, and God bless you. I don't fancy I'll be here next time you come.

FLORA. Oh, Mrs. Gilbert, you mustn't say that!

MRS. GILBERT. There'll be no sorrowing in *my* heart, dearie. Let me see but Sunday and I'll die happy. I shan't give no one any trouble; I'll not

be travellin' far—only down that long road, after Jim.

NOEL (*to FLORA*). I shouldn't let her talk, she looks very tired.

FLORA. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Gilbert.

MRS. GILBERT. Good-bye, dear. And a safe journey home to both of us.

(MRS. TAYLOR, ALICE and MRS. DENT (*the last unveiled*)
rush forward in great excitement.)

MRS. TAYLOR. Might we have a word with you, miss?

MRS. DENT. Arsking your pardon for the liberty

ALICE. We want to tell you something, Miss Flora—

MRS. TAYLOR. Consarnin Mrs. Price.

FLORA. Well? What is it? Is anything wrong?

MRS. PRICE. It's me, Miss Flora. They want to tell you about me Well there! Oh, my goodness!

FLORA. Why, Mrs. Price, what's the matter?

MRS. PRICE (*her voice rising above the others*). I'm took mortal bad, that I am! It's them acid-drops you gave me! (*Writhes.*) I'm pizenened!!

FLORA. Oh, how dreadful! Go for the doctor, please, somebody.

MRS. TAYLOR. Doctor, indeed!

MRS. DENT. It's the perlice she wants.

MRS. PRICE. Oh, my! Oh, dear! Oh, the ingratitude! And me saved them all alive! The doctor!

FLORA. I'll go. I think you're all very unkind.

NOEL. Yes, dear, go, and wait for me outside. I'll send Nurse in; there's nothing *we* can do. Courage, Mrs. Price! Help will soon be here.

(NOEL and FLORA *exit rapidly.*)

MRS. PRICE. Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear! Oh, them pep'mints!

ALICE. Are you really feeling bad, Mrs. Price?

MRS. TAYLOR. Of course, Mrs. Price, if you *are* pizeded, I take back my remarks.

MRS. DENT. Don't let's part in anger, Mrs. Price.

ALICE. The ward'll be sadly quiet without her.

MRS. PRICE. Oh, oh!

MRS. TAYLOR. You won't 'ave much use for this bit of tinned salmon now, will you, Mrs. Price? It'll be tempting Providence surely. *(She takes it.)*

MRS. DENT. Touching that new-laid egg, Mrs. Price. *(She takes it.)*

ALICE. This bit of apple won't improve by keepin'.

MRS. PRICE. You take your 'ands off my property, both of you! *(Seizing all their wrists.)* I'll learn you stealin'! I'll let the doctor know who you are! Accuse *me*, would you! I've got evidence, I have! I'll show you who's Emperor of the Ward! Nurse! Nurse!

(The others are dumbfounded, they stand guiltily with the salmon, etc., in their hands, as the curtain falls rapidly.)

CURTAIN.

THEORY OF THE THERMODYNAMICS OF THE
ELECTROLYTIC CELL

1. The cell is a closed system, and the only work done is electrical work. 2. The cell is at equilibrium with its surroundings. 3. The cell is at constant temperature and pressure. 4. The cell is at constant volume. 5. The cell is at constant pressure. 6. The cell is at constant temperature. 7. The cell is at constant pressure and temperature. 8. The cell is at constant volume and temperature. 9. The cell is at constant pressure and volume. 10. The cell is at constant temperature and volume. 11. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature. 12. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work. 13. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat. 14. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass. 15. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass and energy. 16. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass and energy and momentum. 17. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass and energy and momentum and charge. 18. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass and energy and momentum and charge and entropy. 19. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass and energy and momentum and charge and entropy and information. 20. The cell is at constant pressure and volume and temperature and work and heat and mass and energy and momentum and charge and entropy and information and time.

THEORY OF THE THERMODYNAMICS OF THE
ELECTROLYTIC CELL